MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF MANY LANDS

RETOLD BY

EVELYN SMITH

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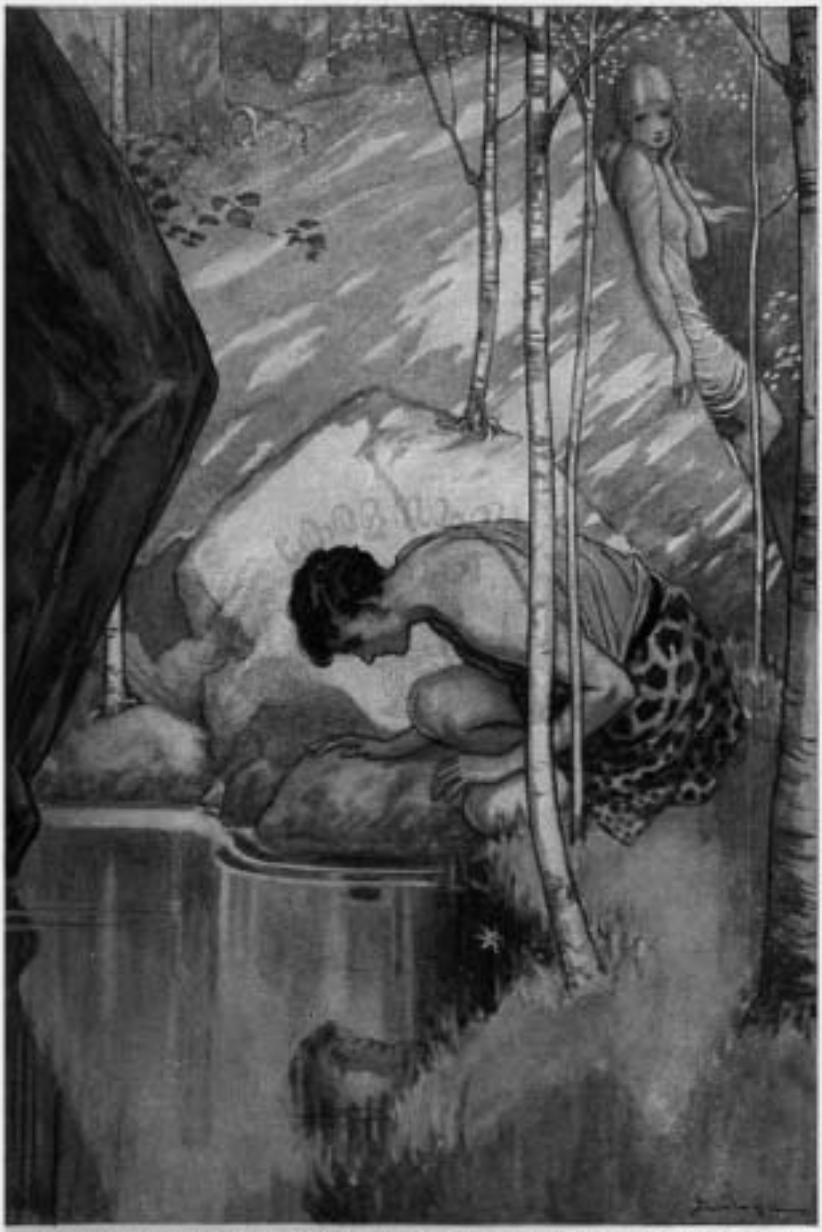

As he sighed "Alas!" the voice of Echo repeated his sigh (page 29)

MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF MANY LANDS

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WITH EIGHT COLOURED PLATES AND CHAPTER HEADINGS BY

A. E. BESTALL

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EVELYN SMITH.

LIST OF COLOURED PLATES

GREECE AND ROME

GREEK AND ROMAN GODS

Note.—The Romans adopted the great Greek deities and identified them with their own gods, while retaining certain cults peculiar to themselves—the worship of household gods, etc. So you will find certain divinities called by one name in the Greek stories, and by another in those of Rome.

Divinity.	*Greek.*	*Roman.*
Goddess of love.	Aphrodite.	Venus.
God of war.	Ares.	Mars.
Virgin goddess of hunting and the moon.	Artemis.	Diana.
Goddess of wisdom.	Pallas Athene, or Athene.	Minerva.
Goddess of the fruits of the earth.	Demeter.	Ceres.
God of wine.	Dionysus.	Bacchus.
God of love.	Eros.	Cupid.
Ruler of the underworld.	Hades.	Pluto.
Smith of the gods.	Hephæstus.	Vulcan.
Queen of heaven and earth.	Hera.	Juno.
Messenger of the gods.	Hermes.	Mercury.
Ruler of the sea.	Poseidon.	Neptune.
Ancient ruler of the world: father of Zeus, Poseidon, Hades.	Kronos.	Saturn.
Ruler of heaven and earth.	Zeus.	Jupiter.

There are many other variations of name, as you will find in reading English poetry: Persephone is called Proserpina; Hades is called Dis; Artemis is called Cynthia; Aphrodite is called Cytherea; etc., etc.

Pronunciation of the Names in the Stories of Greek and Roman Myths.

(*ā* like *a* in play; *ă* like *a* in fat; *å* like *a* in sofa; *ä* like *a* in far; *ē* like *ee* in feet; *ĕ* like *e* in lend; *ē* like *e* in err; *ī* like *i* in mine; *ĭ* like *i* in fin; *ō* like *o* in note; *ŏ* like *o* in not; *ô* like *o* in orb; *ū* like *u* in use.)

Acheron, *ăch'-e-rŏn.*	Amazon, *am'-a-zon.*
Alcmene, *alc-mē'-nē.*	Andromeda, *an-drom'-e-da.*
Alpheus, *al-fē'-us.*	Aphrodite, *af-ro-dī'-te.*

Apollo, *a-pŏl'-lo.*
Arachne, *a-rak'-ne.*
Argo, *ăr'-go.*
Argonauts, *ăr-go-nŏts.*
Argus, *ăr'-gus.*
Athena, *a-thē'-na.*
Athene, *a-thē'-nē.*
Atlas, *at'-las.*
Augeas, *o-jē'-ăs.*
Bacchus, *bac'-cus.*
Bœotia, *bē-ō'-shĭ-a.*
Cassiope, *cas-sī'-o-pē.*
Cassiopeia, *cas-sĭ-o-pē'-a.*
Celeus, *sē'-le-us.*
Cepheus, *sē'-fūs.*
Cerberus, *cĕr'-bĕr-us.*
Chaos, *kā'-os.*
Charon, *kā'-ron.*
Chrysaor, *chrĭ-sā'-ôr.*
Circe, *sĭr'-sē.*
Colchis, *kol'-kis.*
Cyclopes, *sy-clō-pez.*
Danae, *dan'-a-ē.*
Danaus, *dan'-a-us.*
Daphne, *daf'-nē.*
Delphi, *del'-fi.*
Demeter, *dē-mē'-ter.*
Deucalion, *du-cā'-lĭ-ŏn.*
Dictys, *dik'-tys.*
Echo, *ek'-o.*
Eleusis, *e-lū'-sis.*
Epimetheus, *ep-i-mē'-thūs.*
Erebos, *er'-e-bos.*
Erebus, *er'-e-bus.*
Eris, *ē'-ris.*
Eros, *ē'-ros.*
Eurydice, *u-rid'-i-sē.*
Eurylochus, *u-ril'-o-kus.*
Eurystheus, *ū-ris'-thūs.*
Gæa, *gē'-a.*
Geryon, *gē'-rĭ-ŏn.*
Gorgon, *gor'-gon.*
Hades, *hā'-dez.*
Helle, *hel'-lē.*
Hephæstus, *he-fĕs'-tus.*
Hera, Here, *hē'-ra, hē'-re.*
Hercules, *hĕr'-cū-lēz.*
Hermes, *hĕr'-mēz.*
Hesperides, *hes-pĕr'-i-dēz.*
Hestia, *hes'-ti-a.*
Hippolyta, *hip-pol'-i-ta.*
Hymen, *hī'-men.*
Iolaus, *i-o-lā'-us.*
Iolcus, *i-ol'-cus.*
Iphicles, *if'-i-clēz.*
Ixion, *ĭx-ī-ŏn.*
Jason, *jā'-son.*
Juno, *jū'-no.*
Kerberos, *kĕr'-bĕr-os.*
Medea, *me-dē'-a.*
Medusa, *me-dū'-sa.*
Menelaus, *men-e-lā'-us.*
Metaneira, *mē-tā-nī'-rā.*
Minos, *mī'-nŏs.*
Mycenæ, *my-sē'-ne.*
Narcissus, *nar-sis'-sus.*
Nemea, *ne-mē'-a.*
Oread, *ō'-re-ad.*
Orpheus, *or'-fūs.*
Pallas, *pal'-las.*
Pandora, *pan-do'-ra.*
Paris, *păr'-is.*
Parnassus, *pär-nas'-sus.*
Pegasus, *peg'-a-sus.*
Peleus, *pē'-lūs.*
Pelias, *pē'-lĭ-ăs.*
Peneus, *pe-nē'-us.*
Persephone, *per-sef'-o-nē.*
Perseus, *pĕr'-sūs.*
Phrixus, *frix'-us.*
Polydectes, *pol-y-dec'-tēz.*
Poseidon, *po-sī'-don.*
Prometheus, *pro-mē'-thūs.*
Pyrrha, *pĭr'-a.*
Python, *pī'-thŏn.*
Sisyphus, *sis'-y-fus.*
Stymphalian, *stim-fā'-lĭ-an.*
Styx, *stĭx.*
Tartaros, *tär'-tä-ros.*
Thetis, *thē'-tis.*
Titan, *tī'-tan.*
Typhœus, *ti-fō'-ūs.*
Ulysses, *ū-liss'-ēz.*
Uranus, *ū'-rā-nus.*

IN THE BEGINNING

As soon as man is capable of thought he naturally begins to wonder about the world in which he lives. He wonders how the division was made between heaven and earth, light and darkness, land and water; how it came to pass that the sun moves over the sky by day, and the moon by night; what may be the substance of the stars, and the nature of fire and thunder; and, most of all, what first caused life, and what power controls the destiny of man.

Every people has some way of accounting for these mysteries. As you read of the thoughts and beliefs of men of old, you will find that there is often a resemblance between them, that similar ideas are to be found in the stories of people separated by wide tracts of land and sea; and this is not altogether surprising, for human beings must apprehend and imagine things in a human way, in whatever part of the world they dwell. You will find, too, that there are differences —that the climate and surroundings in which people live influence their imagination, and that they think in terms of things which are familiar, and either precious or terrible to them.

This is how the Greeks thought of the beginning of the world, and the early history of gods and men.

First was Chaos—formless mass, emptiness, darkness. Then Earth came into being, and Eros, or Love, who was to control the hearts of all living things. From Chaos came

Erebos, the great darkness that is below Earth, and Night. From Earth came the starry Heaven, the lofty mountains, and the sea.

Then the mystery of light and love began to stir in this world of darkness, of earth, of heaven. Erebos and Night, Earth and Heaven, took form and spirit, became as gods and goddesses, divine beings of human shape. Erebos and Night wedded, and from their union sprang the light of day, and the bright radiance of the upper sky. Heaven, or Uranus, and Earth, or Gæa, wedded, and had many children, some beautiful, some terrible. Now Heaven feared these last-born sons, the giant Cyclopes with one eye in the middle of their forehead, and the monsters with fifty heads and a hundred arms apiece. He imprisoned them in the dark caverns of misty Tartaros, the underworld, and would not let them rise up into the light. Earth grieved for these sons of hers, and calling together her elder children, besought them to avenge the wrong done by their father.

One alone consented to weaken his strength, and this was Kronos, called "Kronos of the crooked counsels," for he was cunning and crafty. His mother gave him a jagged sickle made of grey adamant, and he watched his opportunity, and crept to his father's side as he lay sleeping, and wounded him most terribly, and overcame him. From the blood of the old god sprang monstrous giants, and furies with snaky hair. Then Heaven called his children Titans, from a word that means *straining*, for he said that by straining to overtop his power they had done a fearful deed.

Kronos was now lord of the universe, which he ruled with Rhea, his sister and his queen. Their daughters were Hestia, the fire goddess, and Demeter, the goddess of corn and the fruits of the earth, and golden-sandalled Hera; and their sons were Zeus, and Poseidon, and strong Hades, with the pitiless heart.

The father of Kronos might have feared him with good cause, and Kronos feared his children, for Heaven and Earth had told him that one of them should dethrone him. In due time his sons rose against him and strove to wrest his power from him, and war broke out between the gods and the Titans, in earth and in heaven.

The Titans, except Okeanos, fought on the side of Kronos against Zeus and his brothers; but Zeus, advised by Earth, released from Tartaros the monster brothers of Kronos, whom he had not set free after wounding Heaven. They were

grateful to their deliverer, and they gave him the weapons of thunder and lightning, and fought for him with all their huge strength. After many battles, with hurling of thunderbolts, death-dealing flashes of lightning, shocks of falling mountains, and quakings of the earth, Zeus prevailed, and divided the rule of the universe with his brothers. He himself was lord of heaven and earth; Poseidon ruled the sea; and Hades the underworld, the realm of Tartaros, where Kronos and many of the Titans were imprisoned in darkness for ever.

Now the earth lies midway between heaven and this Tartaros. If an anvil of bronze were to fall from heaven for nine nights and nine days, it would reach earth on the tenth day; if it fell from earth for nine days and nine nights, on the tenth it would reach Tartaros. Round Tartaros is a bronze fence, and about this fence lies night, while above are the roots of the earth and the sea. Great whirlwinds fill the place, and at the bronze threshold stands the Titan Atlas, who must for ever bear the burden of the heavens on his head and shoulders. Night and Day pass over this threshold, greeting one another as they come and go. Day carries light in her hands; Night, wrapped in clouds, bears sleep with her.

There in Tartaros is the dark, echoing palace of Hades, who rules this realm. Before it the three-headed dog Kerberos keeps watch, and fawns on those who enter the gates; but, should any try to go forth again, he seizes them and devours them.

Many more conflicts were in store for Zeus before he firmly established his power—conflicts with the giants born from the blood of the wounded Uranus; and, most terrible of all, with the last child of Earth, the strong Typhœus, from whose shoulders sprang the heads of a hundred serpents, and who had a myriad voices, the voices of beasts and men and gods. Zeus leapt on him from Olympus, the high mountain which was the abode of the gods on earth, and smote him with his thunderbolt and thrust him deep into the abyss of Tartaros, and pressed him down with the roots of Etna, where still he breathes forth smoke and flame.

One Titan had won the favour of Zeus. This was Prometheus. At the time of the war between Kronos and his sons, Prometheus had at first tried to help those who fought for Kronos, but they disdained his wise counsels, and he deserted them and served Zeus. Some say that it was through the wisdom and cunning of Prometheus that Zeus

at last prevailed; certainly this Titan did not stand in awe of the king of heaven and earth, and dared to question his will.

Now for many years men had dwelt on earth. In the time of Kronos the gods had made a race of men like themselves, except that they were not immortal. These knew neither sorrow nor evil. Earth bore fruit and corn in plenty for their needs; they did not labour, they did not strive with one another, but lived a life of joy and peace. They were not afflicted with illness or old age; when they died, it was as if they fell asleep, and after death they lived on as good spirits, watching over the destiny of those on the earth. This was the Golden Age of the history of man.

Under the rule of Zeus the immortal gods fashioned another race, the men of the Silver Age. These were inferior to the men of the Golden Age in both body and mind; they sinned against one another, and would not honour the gods. Nor was their lot so happy as that of the former race; earth no longer yielded her fruits plentifully, and, for the first time, men experienced the parching heat and drought of summer, the cruel cold of winter. They needed implements with which to till the earth; they needed warmth in time of frost and snow; they needed the gift of fire. But this gift Zeus withheld, for he was planning their destruction and the creation of another race.

Then the Titan Prometheus, who had always been eager to do good to men, stole the red fire-flowers from the fields of heaven, and hid them in a stalk of fennel, and carried them to earth. By them men were warmed and comforted. And, now they had the precious gift of fire, they could make ploughshares, and tools with which to build houses and ships. Prometheus taught them how to do these things, and many others; he taught them all that makes life worth while.

But when Zeus knew of the Titan's theft he was filled with fierce anger against him for his presumption and disobedience. It seemed as if he threatened the power of the ruler of heaven and earth, and would himself have shaped and governed the world of man. So Zeus called his son Hephæstus, the smith of the gods, who wrought wonderful weapons and armour in his forge on Mount Etna, and commanded him to make a great chain, and bind Prometheus, and nail him to a rock in the Caucasus Mountains.

Hephæstus was loth to perform this task, but he durst not refuse. Prometheus was chained to a lofty crag, and there,

day by day, an eagle preyed on his liver, which grew as it was destroyed, so that the torture was never-ending. For ages the benefactor of man suffered this awful punishment, but he gained strength to endure it from the knowledge that one day he should be delivered from it by a hero among men. This came to pass when the great Hercules killed the eagle and freed the Titan from his bonds.

Zeus not only punished Prometheus, he brought fresh troubles on the human race. Hitherto there had been only men in the world. Now, at the command of Zeus, Hephæstus made of earth a most beautiful woman. The goddess Athene wove shining raiment for her, and clad her in it, and set a crown of gold and a garland on her head. Aphrodite gave her the power of exciting love, and Hermes gave her the gift of speech—gave her, too, a deceitful soul. She was named Pandora, "the gift of all," for all the gods had given her some gift. Last of all they gave her a jar, with instructions not to open it, and then Hermes carried her to the earth, and offered her to Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus.

Epimetheus took her gladly, though Prometheus had warned him to accept no gift from Zeus. She had not been long on earth when, overcome with curiosity, she lifted the lid of the jar and peeped in. At once there rushed from within a host of miseries for man—pains to hurt his body, and evil thoughts and feelings to afflict his mind, and, once freed, they could not again be caught and imprisoned. Only one thing remained in the jar, shut down by the frightened Pandora. That was hope.

The Silver Age was followed by the Bronze Age, when men were again displeasing to Zeus, and he again resolved to destroy them all. So he sent torrents of rain from heaven, and flooded the whole earth. His brother Poseidon, aiding him, struck the earth with his trident, and the hidden sources of the rivers and springs rushed out into mighty floods. Soon there was no distinction between earth and sea: all the land was one vast ocean, with only one place of refuge—the topmost peaks of Parnassus, the highest mountain in Greece.

Now Deucalion, the son of Prometheus, following his father's counsel, had built himself a boat like a chest of wood, and in this he and his wife Pyrrha embarked when the waters rose over the earth. They grounded safely on Parnassus, and there, when the flood abated, they prayed and sacrificed to Zeus, who was not only king of heaven and earth, but the god of escape. He took pity on them, and sent his messenger

Hermes to ask Deucalion to choose what he would, and his wish should be gratified.

Deucalion said that what he wished most was to repeople the empty world. Then Zeus bade him and his wife take up stones from the earth and cast them over their heads. They did this, and the stones which Deucalion threw became men, and the stones which Pyrrha threw became women. So the race of man was created anew, and fresh life began on the earth.

THE SORROW OF DEMETER

Among the goddesses whom the Greeks honoured most was golden-tressed Demeter, who made the corn of the fields and the fruit of the orchards ripen in due season. Demeter had a fair daughter named Persephone, whom she loved more dearly than anything in heaven or on the earth.

One morning in early summer Persephone went with her friends, the nymphs of the ocean, to play in the meadows by the sea. There grew crocuses of purple and silver and gold, and irises, and roses, and violets, and lilies—a wonder of loveliness. As the girls wandered here and there, gathering flowers for garlands, Persephone strayed apart from the rest. Suddenly she saw before her a clump of narcissus, and even the gods would have marvelled at its beauty. A hundred blossoms grew from its root, and their sweetness filled the air of heaven and earth and sea.

In amazement and delight Persephone stretched out both hands to pluck the flower. As she pulled it, a wide, black chasm gaped in the earth before her. Up sprang a golden chariot drawn by deathless horses, and driven by Hades, the mighty god of the dark underworld, the abode of the souls of the dead.

She shrank back in terror, but before she could escape he seized her, and flung her into the golden chariot, and drove away. She cried out shrilly, but no one heard her save the dark goddess of night, who sat brooding in her cave, and the

bright sun god, who received prayer and sacrifice from men in his temple. But as long as she saw earth and sky and sea and the light of the sun, Persephone thought help would come, and cried out again and again, till the chariot disappeared into the dark abyss below the earth, and the earth closed over the place, and her voice was heard no more.

But her last sharp, frightened cry had reached the ears of her mother, Demeter. The goddess cast a dark mantle over her shoulders and took torches in her hands and sought the earth for her daughter. For nine days she sought, and for that time she did not taste nectar and ambrosia, the food of the gods, nor did she rest. At dawn of the tenth day the goddess of night met her, and said:

"O great Demeter, who among the gods of heaven or the mortal men of earth has stolen Persephone? I heard her voice crying, but I know not who carried her away."

The golden-tressed goddess answered not a word, but hastened on until she came to where the sun god stood by his flaming chariot, and she stopped and questioned him.

"If ever I have brought happiness to thee, have pity on me, and tell me of my daughter. I heard her cry as if she were hurt and afraid, but I know not whence she cried. Thou seest all: tell me who has stolen her away from me against her will."

"I pity thee, great Demeter," answered the sun god. "The king of heaven and earth has given her to Hades, his brother, and Hades has carried her away to his kingdom. But do not grieve too bitterly, for the husband of your daughter is a god and a king."

He called to his horses, and swift as long-winged birds they drew his chariot on across the sky. But Demeter was not comforted: anger and grief filled her heart. She left the abode of the gods on high Olympus, and, taking the form of an old woman, wandered on earth among the cities and fields of men.

At last she sank down to rest by the wayside, in the shade of an olive tree, near the house of Celeus, Prince of Eleusis. There she sat, not a golden-tressed and stately goddess, but a poor old tired woman, of no more account in the world.

Now the four daughters of Celeus came with bronze jars to draw water from the well near the olive tree. They were golden-haired and tall and gay, as beautiful as young goddesses. They took pity on the old woman crouching in the shade, and asked her gently why she was there alone.

She told them that she had been carried by pirates from her home in Crete, and, escaping from them, had come to this strange city. If she could find work befitting a woman of her years, she would gladly do it. She could nurse and tend a child, and teach the serving-maids their tasks, and see that they performed them well.

The fairest of the daughters of Celeus comforted her.

"The gods are stronger than we are, and we must endure what they give us, however bitter it may be," she said. "But do not despair. There is not a woman in this city who would turn thee from her door, for there is something divine in thy look. I will tell my mother of thee, and it may be that she will take thee as nurse to her little son, her last-born child."

So Demeter went to the hall of Celeus. The girls entered and ran to Metaneira, their mother, who sat nursing her baby son; but the goddess paused on the threshold. When the mother looked towards her she saw a stately figure, so tall that her head touched the roof-beam, while a radiance came from her, so that all the doorway was filled with light. Then she was afraid of this stranger, and begged her to sit in the place of honour, but Demeter would not do that. A bent old woman once more, she entered the hall and took a stool, and, shrouded in her dark mantle, sat in silence, thinking of her lost Persephone, and sorrowful because of her thoughts.

Metaneira laid her little son in her arms.

"Surely thou art of noble birth," she said. "Thine eyes are the eyes of a queen. But I will do what thou hast asked. Here is my child; bring him up well, and every woman in the city shall envy thee, I will give thee such rich gifts."

So Demeter nursed the child, and he grew like a young god, for she anointed him with ambrosia, and by night she laid him like a torch in the fire, to make him immortal, —free for ever from old age and death. But, before he was strengthened by her divine power, Metaneira chanced to see her place him among the flames, and she cried out in terror and despair, for she thought that the stranger meant to kill her child.

In anger the goddess turned upon her as she stood trembling and weeping, and took the child from the fire and cast him on the ground.

"By the water of Styx, by the sacred oath of the gods, I would have made this child immortal. But now he must grow old and die like other men; yet he will live gloriously, for he has rested on my knees and slept in my arms. I am

Demeter, who, of all the immortal gods ye worship, brings most good to mortal men."

As she spoke she stood there in all the divine beauty of the goddess, the fragrance of the flowers of heaven about her, and her hair on her shoulders like flame, and all the house was filled with light as she passed away, leaving Metaneira stricken with remorse and fear.

Her daughters came and comforted her, and they tended the child; but he was angry and unhappy, for he had been nursed by the goddess, and could not rest content with human care. Then Celeus called the people, and they built a temple to Demeter on the rock near that place. There she abode in Eleusis, sorrowing and longing for her lost Persephone.

As Demeter grieved alone, a terrible time of famine came upon the earth. Without her care and blessing the corn would not grow and ripen, and all the race of men would have perished, had not Zeus, lacking the sacrifice of the fruits of the earth, seen their misery and resolved to help them.

He sent Iris, the rainbow goddess, to plead with golden-tressed Demeter to return to her abode among the immortals. Swiftly Iris sped along her bright bridge spanning the space between heaven and earth, and came to the temple at Eleusis. But Demeter would not return. One by one the great gods came to her and offered her gifts and all the honours gods can bestow; but these things were of no account to her: her one thought was for her lovely lost Persephone.

Then Zeus called Hermes, his winged messenger, who had the power of winning the hearts of gods and men by his sweet and gentle words, and bade him go to the realm of Hades and entreat the king to let Persephone return to earth again, so that her mother might see her, and her anger might abate.

So Hermes hastened on winged feet below the hollow places of the earth to the dark underworld, and besought Hades to restore Persephone. Hades easily granted his prayer, and joyously and swiftly Persephone arose from her dark couch, longing to go back to the light of earth and to her mother.

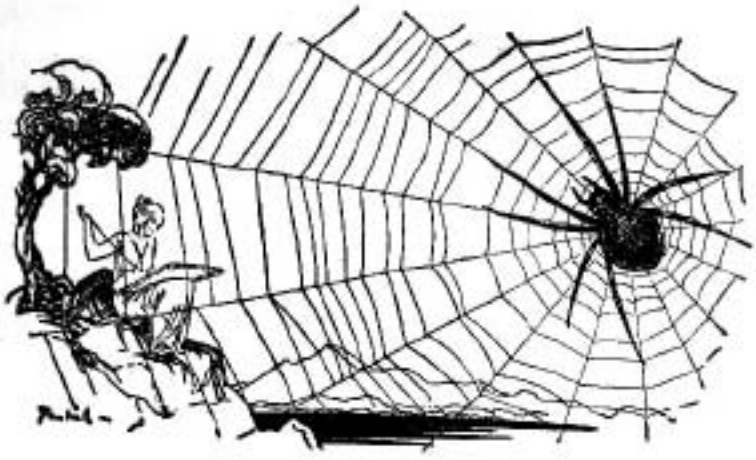
But Hades was afraid that she might not return. So he gave her pomegranate seed to eat, for whoever tastes of the food of the dead cannot escape from the abode of the dead.

Then the swift and deathless horses of Hades were harnessed to his golden chariot, and Hermes drove Persephone back to the world and through the air to the temple where her mother dwelt. Demeter rushed out to meet her child, and at once

all the sorrow went from her, and her heart was filled with the joy of love.

Now Persephone was with her she returned to the neglected earth, and the grain sprouted and came up green in the fields, and leaves crowded out on the trees, and the meadows and glades were thick with flowers. In due time came harvest, and the tall, ripe corn was cut and bound into sheaves; there was abundance as of old, because the grief and anger of Demeter were at an end.

But Persephone had tasted the food of the dead, and she must return again to their realm. For one third of the year she dwelt with Hades, and was queen of the underworld; for the other two parts she came to earth and abode with her mother. When she goes into her dark kingdom her mother grieves for her, and the land is barren and the trees are leafless; but when she comes from the gloom the fields are gay with flowers, and the earth is fruitful once more. For Demeter is happy, and her blessing is on the world of men



ARACHNE

In a little city on the shores of the Mediterranean lived a maiden called Arachne, famed for the art of working in wool. It was a pleasure to see the garments she made, and so great was her skill, it was a pleasure to see her making them. The nymphs of the vineyards and the streams would forsake their own places and gather round her to watch her as she worked, rolling the rough wool into balls, or drawing it out into long fleeces as fine as mist, or plying the spindle, or embroidering with the needle.

"Her craft is more than mortal," they would say. "She has been taught by the goddess Pallas Athene herself."

Arachne was angry when she heard them speak thus, for she wanted all the credit of her skill. She declared that the goddess had taught her nothing, and wished that they might compete with one another, and prove whose art was the greater.

Pallas heard this boastful talk, and, taking the form of a bent, grey-haired old woman, went to the place where Arachne wove, watched by a little group of admiring matrons and maids.

"Old age has experience," she said. "Do not despise my advice. Say that no one among mortals can rival you in weaving and embroidery, but acknowledge that a goddess must be your superior. Ask her pardon for boasting as you have done—she will grant it."

Arachne laid down her thread and scowled at the old woman.

"You have lived too long," she said. "Your wits are worn out. Don't think that you can make me change my opinion. I want no advice: I know all I want to know. Why does not the goddess come here? Why does she shrink from trying her skill against mine?"

"She is here," said the stranger. And she cast aside her disguise and stood there—Pallas herself. All the onlookers did her homage, all but Arachne. A little colour came into her cheeks, but vanished as quickly as the colour of dawn. She persisted in her wish to try her skill against that of the goddess, and it was granted.

The two stretched out the webs on the loom, and, with threads of purple and gold, and all the bright and faint hues that are in the rainbow, began their embroidery.

Pallas depicted the naming of Athens. In the past she herself and the sea god Poseidon had disputed the right of naming the city, and it had been decided that whoever should give its people the greater gift should have this privilege. Poseidon struck a rock with his trident, and out leapt a horse; Pallas struck the earth with her spear, and up sprang an olive tree. The gods declared that she had won the contest, and she called the city after her own name of Athene.

With marvellous skill did the goddess show this scene and the gods who watched it. In the four corners of the web, embroidered in tiny figures, she represented the fate of foolish mortals who, through arrogance, had incurred divine displeasure. Round the whole she set a border of olive leaves.

Arachne, too, chose to depict the gods. She thought of the tales told of their errors and their deeds of violence, and these she showed with such skill that the figures seemed real. She edged the web with a design of flowers twined with ivy.

No one could have found fault with the artistry of that work, but its irreverence angered Pallas, and she tore it to pieces, and struck Arachne with her shuttle. The unhappy girl, unable to endure the disgrace she had brought upon herself, attempted to take her life, hanging herself with a halter. But Pallas pitied her, and took her in her arms, and supported her as she hung.

"Live on," she cried, "but hang for ever."

Then she sprinkled her with the juice of aconite, and her head grew small and her body large, and her slender fingers drew in to her sides and became legs. She swung from a long thread, and—a spider—she still laboured as she had done when a mortal maiden, working for ever at her web.

ECHO AND NARCISSUS

Echo was one of the Oreads, the mountain nymphs. She loved to talk, and she would entertain Juno, queen of heaven and earth, with her stories. But on certain occasions she prevented the goddess from carrying out plans she had made, detaining her to listen to what she had to say. So Juno became angry with her, and declared that henceforward she should have very little use of her tongue. The threat was fulfilled: Echo found that she could no longer speak from her own mind, but must always repeat the last words spoken by some one else.

At this time a beautiful youth called Narcissus was accustomed to hunt and wander in the forests and on the mountains. When he was born his mother had consulted a seer as to his future. Would he live to be an old man? The answer was a strange one: "If he never recognizes himself."

This youth was loved by many of the nymphs, but he cared for none of them. When she saw his extraordinary beauty, Echo, too, fell in love with him, and wished above all things that he would let her hunt with him, or show her some sign of his favour.

One day Narcissus became separated from his friends, and found himself, as he thought, alone. Echo, who cared only to watch him, was near at hand; but this he did not know.

"Is there any one here?" he cried.

"Here," repeated Echo. It was all that she could say.

"Come!" called Narcissus.

"Come!" answered Echo.

Still he called, and still she answered, mocking him, it seemed. At last they met, and seeing all too plainly her love for him, Narcissus turned and fled.

"I will die before thou shalt love me," he cried.

"Love me," repeated Echo. But he gave no heed to her plaintive cry, and left her to herself in the woods.

The unhappy Echo wandered about alone, grieving because he fled from her. Every day she grew more pinched and shrivelled, until at last she wasted away. Her bones became stones; all that remained alive was her voice, and still the voice obeyed the curse of Juno, and spoke nothing of its own free will, but patiently repeated the last words of others.

Meanwhile Narcissus, for whose love Echo had perished, was content with himself and cared for no one. At last another nymph, who had suffered from his scorn, prayed that he too should love, and never obtain what he loved.

In the forest was a clear pool among grasses. Thick trees surrounded it, so that the water was always cold. Tired out with the exertion of hunting and the heat of the sun, Narcissus came upon this pool, and lay down to drink.

What marvellous beauty gazed up at him from the depths of the water! As still as if he were a stone statue, he gazed at the red and white skin, the starry eyes, the hair bright as that of the sun god.

Filled with admiration, he stretched out his arms to embrace this lovely image, and saw it make a like gesture towards himself. All in vain; they were kept apart, as he imagined, by the spell of a little water. It was now his turn to suffer the sorrows of unhappy love. He would not leave the place, but remained gazing at the reflection of himself, lamenting the woe of loving what he could not obtain. And, as he sighed, "Alas!" the voice of Echo repeated his sigh; and, as he mourned, "Ah, beloved in vain!" the voice of Echo came thin and small, "In vain."

Wasted by the flame of his hopeless love, he pined away and died. The nymphs of the woods and streams, mourning his fate, made ready the funeral pile, and the torches, and the bier. But when they sought his body they could not find it. Where it had lain, by the pool where the entrancing image had dwelt, was a white and yellow flower, gazing at its reflection in the water. In the beauty of this narcissus flower was the beauty of the lost youth remembered.

APOLLO'S TREE

APOLLO, the god of the sun, had killed the enormous serpent Python with his arrows. The memory of the great feat was fresh in his mind when he came across Eros, the love god, bending his bow.

"What have you to do with arms?" said he. "Leave the bow to me, who can wound man and beast, who have slain the great Python, and be content to play with your torch."

"Wound what you will with your bow, Apollo; my bow shall wound you," boasted Eros. "By as much as all beasts are inferior to you, your power is inferior to mine."

Then he took two arrows from his quiver, a sharp one of shining gold, causing love, and a blunt leaden one, repelling it. With the blunt one he struck Daphne, the daughter of the river god Peneus; with the golden one he pierced Apollo to the very core of his heart.

At once the sun god was consumed with love for Daphne. But she could not endure the thought of lovers and love, and spent her days in solitude, hunting in the depths of the forest. When her father spoke to her of marriage, she implored him to let her vow herself to perpetual maidenhood, as the goddess Diana had done in times long past.

In vain did Apollo praise her beauty. She fled from him swifter than the wind. "Stay, stay, I entreat thee," he called. "Do not flee from me as if I were an enemy; I follow because

I love, and I should grieve most bitterly wert thou to fall in thy haste, and be scratched and hurt with briars. I am no shepherd, Daphne; my father is king of heaven and of earth. I know what shall be, what has been, what is; I can blend the music of words with the music of the lyre. I understand the magic of herbs, and I heal men with their healing arts. But, unhappy that I am, I do not understand how I may heal myself of the love I feel for thee."

Daphne paid no heed to his prayer. Still she fled, and the wind ruffled her hair and set her garments fluttering about her. Apollo implored no longer; as swift as the greyhound on the track of the hare he followed her, and was soon close upon her.

Pale and weary, she looked upon the waters of the river Peneus, and prayed, "Oh, my father, help me, if you gods of the rivers have the power of gods. Oh, Earth, swallow me up, and change my form, which has made me loved against my will."

No sooner had she spoken than all her limbs felt stiff and heavy. Her feet, a minute before so swift, were drawn by roots into the ground; a thin bark crept over her body; her arms became branches; her hair green leaves. All that remained of Daphne was her shining beauty, now seen in the shining beauty of the tree.

"O Daphne," cried the god, "if thou canst not be my wife, thou shalt be my tree. I will wear a garland of laurel; laurel shall crown those who make music like mine; laurel shall honour those who win great victories in battle. And, like the bright hair of the sun god, thy leaves shall never fade and fall."

As he ceased speaking, the laurel tree moved and swayed as if it understood his words and was glad because of them.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

WHEN Orpheus, the son of Apollo, who had his divine father's skill with the lyre, wooed and won the maiden Eurydice, he called upon Hymen to honour their wedding feast. The god of marriage, clad in his saffron-coloured robe, obeyed the summons, but he brought neither fair words nor joyful looks, and the torch he held did not burn with a clear, bright flame, but smoked and smouldered, making the eyes of the guests smart with tears.

The evil omens were fulfilled. Soon after her wedding day, as Eurydice ran over a grassy sward, she was stung on the ankle by a serpent, and died.

Great was the grief of Orpheus. He mourned her loss to those who dwell in earth and in heaven, and, as they were powerless to help him, resolved to descend to the lower world, the abode of departed spirits, and implore Hades and Persephone, king and queen of this dark kingdom, to give him his wife again.

He crossed the black river Styx, in whose name the gods made their oaths, and stood before the throne of the rulers of the shades. There, striking his lyre, he sang of the sorrow of the death of Eurydice, and of his love and longing for her. Such love, he said, the dark king himself had known when he snatched Persephone from her flower-gathering to be his queen. To his kingdom every one on earth is hastening; it is our last home, and his is the only dominion that can endure.

Eurydice must come to it one day, when she had fulfilled her years on the earth, and it was as a favour that he implored to have her with him once more for a little time. If the favour might not be granted he would not return: he would rather dwell with her in the dark kingdom of Hades than live in the light of earth alone.

As they heard his song of love and sorrow, the sad phantoms of that kingdom wept. For a little those who had done evil, and must atone for it, were relieved from their torment and labour. Tantalus, who had served to the gods a banquet of human flesh, and now ever strove to cool his parched throat at a pool of water which flowed away as he bent to drink, forgot his thirst. The great wheel to which Ixion, who had insulted the queen of heaven, was bound with serpents, swung slowly and stood still. A moment's rest came to Sisyphus, punished for betraying Zeus by eternally rolling a huge stone to the top of a mountain. The daughters of Danaus, who had slain their husbands, and now tried for ever to fill a vessel full of holes, paused from their endless task. Even the snaky-haired Furies, who scourged with serpent-whips of remorse those who had not been punished by earthly justice, felt, for the first time, their cheeks wet with tears as the sad music of Orpheus sounded through the realm of Hades.

Neither the king nor the queen of that dark kingdom could refuse what he asked. Eurydice should be restored to him, but he must not turn to look at her until they had passed away from that place. She was called from the company of shades who had just reached the underworld, and came slowly, limping because of her hurt foot, and followed Orpheus back towards earth again.

In silence they mounted the steep, dark path, and had almost ended their journey when, longing to see his wife, and fearing lest she should lag too far behind him, Orpheus suddenly turned. Instantly she sank away from him, stretching out her arms, eager to grasp him and to feel his touch. He could hardly hear her last farewell, so swiftly was she drawn back to the dark realm of death from which she had come.

Quickly the ferryman, Charon, drove the wanderer into his boat and rowed him across Acheron, the River of Woe, to earth again. His opportunity had passed away: he had lost Eurydice until he too should die.

He wandered to a grassy hill, where no trees gave shade, and again he took his lyre and made music to console himself in his desolation. Then a shadow crept over the place, for the

trees had come to hear. The holm-oak, heavy with acorns, the two-coloured maple, the tender lime, the evergreen box, the willow from the river, the creeping ivy, the elm supporting the vine, the red-fruited arbutus, the dark, bristling pine, the palm, reward of the conqueror—all sprang up there to hear the music Orpheus made. Then the savage beasts of the place drew near and listened to his lyre, and he could have charmed them to follow and obey him.

It happened that the women of Thrace celebrated the rites of Bacchus, the god of wine, on a hilltop near where Orpheus played. Clad in deer and leopard skins, their hair garlanded with leaves of ivy and vine, they honoured the god with wild dance and song. When they saw Orpheus they were moved to frenzy, for they knew that he despised and disdained them, and thought only of the dead Eurydice. One flung a leaf-twined spear at him, another a stone. Spear and stone turned from him; every missile was enchanted by the sweet sound of his music.

Then a huge clamour rose among the fierce revellers. The shrill shrieking of pipes, the clash and rattle of cymbals, the clapping of hands, the wild uproar of voices, overpowered the lyre. It could not be heard: its spell was broken.

The worshippers of Bacchus seized the birds and beasts that still remained in a charmed ring, and tore them to pieces, and, their hands dripping with blood, turned upon Orpheus. They hurled their sacred thyrsi, rods wreathed with ivy, caring not at all that they used them for destruction. They flung stones and clods of earth and branches of trees, and then, seeing some countrymen at work in the fields, they swept down upon them. The men fled, and the mænads tore to pieces the oxen yoked to the plough, and seized harrows and rakes and spades, and, with these as weapons, they murdered Orpheus, and flung his head and his lyre into the river Hebrus. But his spirit sprang from his bruised and mutilated body, and hastened to the world of shades, and there at last he regained his lost Eurydice, and was with her for ever.

THE DEEDS OF PERSEUS

THE King of Argos was warned by an oracle that the son of his daughter Danae would slay him. So, when the child was born, he feared him above all things, and determined to put an end to his life. He set mother and babe adrift on the sea in a wooden chest, hoping that it would founder and they would perish. But it was washed up on the shores of Seriphus, where it was discovered by a fisherman called Dictys, who took pity on the outcasts and brought them to the court of his brother Polydectes, the king of that country.

For many years Polydectes treated the boy, who was named Perseus, with kindness, but there came a time when he wished him out of the way, hoping to gain the love of Danae, who was engrossed in her son. So he sent him on a terrible quest, to slay the Gorgon Medusa, a monster feared by all men.

Once Medusa had been a beautiful girl, and of all her beauties the greatest was her hair. But she brought upon herself the anger of the goddess Pallas by profaning her temple, and Pallas changed her hair into a mass of writhing serpents, and made her face so terrible that the sight of it turned those who looked upon it into stone.

By himself Perseus would have been powerless to slay this Gorgon, but Hermes and Athena were his friends, and they helped him. They told him that three ancient sisters, the Grey Women, knew the dwelling-place of the nymphs who

possessed the things that would enable him to achieve his quest—winged sandals, a helmet of darkness, and a wallet in which to carry the Gorgon's head when he had slain her and cut it off—and they guided him across the lonely plains to the home of these old women.

There they were, withered old creatures who had never been young, their hair white as the plumage of the swan, but one eye and one tooth between them. Perseus stood watching his opportunity, and, as one sister passed the eye to another, he stretched out his hand and took it from her, and would not give it back until he heard where the nymphs dwelt. The blind old sisters told him the secret; he gave them back their eye, and sought the nymphs, and asked them for the things that would help him. These they willingly gave him, and Hermes gave him an adamantine sickle. Armed and ready, he put on the winged shoes and flew to the lonely place by the ocean, where Medusa, who alone of the Gorgons was mortal, dwelt with her two sisters, who, like the gods, were deathless and ageless. Now these Gorgons had heads covered with the scales of dragons, and tusks like swine, and brazen hands, and golden wings.

As Perseus went on his way, he passed the silent figures of men and beasts who had gazed on the face of Medusa and had become stone. He might have shared their fate had it not been for the help of Athena. She held up a shining shield before him, and bade him watch it so that he might see the horror reflected in it, and not directly. Invisible in his helmet of darkness, he came upon the Gorgons sleeping, and Athena guided his hand, and he cut off the head of Medusa, and carried it away with him. From the blood of the dead Gorgon sprang the winged horses, Pegasus and Chrysaor, one of which was to stand another hero in good stead in time to come. Then he soared into the air and travelled swiftly across the Libyan sands on his journey home. As he went, drops of blood dripped from the severed head, and, on touching the ground, became serpents.

He hid the head in his wallet, and drifting now east, now west, carried by the winds like a cloud, he flew over the whole world, among the stars. Descending to rest, he passed the garden of the Hesperides, with its golden-fruited trees, and came to where Atlas held up the heavens on his shoulders. He spoke to the Titan, and told him that he had come from a great enterprise, and asked him for hospitality and a resting-place.

But Atlas was afraid of this youth, for it had been prophesied that the golden fruit should be stolen from the garden watched by his daughters and the sleepless dragon, and by such a one as Perseus. So he spoke roughly and angrily to him, and threatened to drive him away by force if he would not go at once.

"Since my friendship is nothing to you, I will give you this present," said Perseus, and drew the head of the Medusa from his wallet, and held it up before Atlas, turning his own face away. Instantly the Titan was transformed into a great stony mountain. His shoulders and his hands were huge ridges; his head a mountain peak; his hair and beard shaggy woods. Still the mountain performed the Titan's task, and held up the sky with all its stars.

Perseus flew on and on, until he hovered above the kingdom of Ethiopia, where Cepheus was king. There, bound by the arms to a rock on the seashore, was a most beautiful maiden. So perfect was her form that he would have thought her cut from marble, had not the tears running down her cheeks shown her to be a living thing.

Alighting on the shore, he begged her to tell him her name, and to say why she was thus bound with chains.

Weeping still, she told him that she was called Andromeda, and was the daughter of a king. Her mother, proud of her beauty, had declared that she was lovelier than the nereids. Angry at such presumption, they demanded vengeance from their father, the god of the sea, and he had sent a great sea beast to devour the people of that country. In despair, the king consulted an oracle of the gods, and learned that, to avert this disaster, Andromeda, whose beauty was the cause of her mother's boasting, must be given to the monster.

Before Andromeda had finished telling her story, the waves roared, and a huge and terrible creature was seen raising its head from the ocean. She shrieked aloud, and her father and mother, who had come to the place where their child must be sacrificed, wept and clung to her, unable to help her, unable to do anything but sorrow for her fate.

"There is time for tears hereafter," said Perseus. "The time to give help is short. I am Perseus. I have slain the Gorgon with her snaky locks. I have dared to move through the air on wings. I will free Andromeda, if she may be mine when she is freed."

Her parents eagerly agreed to this, and promised the kingdom as her dowry. Then Perseus waited, watching the monster.

On it came, dashing the waves aside as a great ship dashes them from its prow. As it drew close to the rock up sprang Perseus, borne by his wings into the clouds, and, though he was invisible, his shadow lay on the sea.

The monster plunged in furious anger upon the shadow, and instantly, like an eagle seizing the back of a serpent, Perseus swooped down upon it, and thrust his sword up to the hilt in its right shoulder. It roared in agony, and wheeled about, trying to seize him in its jaws, while he, darting here and there on his wings, wounded it again and again. But the wings became soaked with spray and blood, and, afraid to trust himself any longer to their support, he rested on a rock covered by the sea, and seizing its topmost ridge with his left hand, thrust his sword to the monster's heart. A great shout of triumph and applause went up from the assembled people, and Cepheus and Cassiopeia hailed Perseus as their son, the saviour of their daughter.

The hero washed the blood from his hands in the water of the sea, and he strewed some fresh seaweed on the sand, and laid the head of the Medusa upon it. At once the seaweed hardened and stiffened, and its leaves and trails became branches of coral.

Then Perseus built three altars of turf, and offered sacrifices of thanksgiving to Zeus, Pallas Athena, and Hermes; while in the gilded halls of the palace a splendid marriage feast was made ready.

After Perseus had wedded Andromeda he returned to Seriphus, and there he found that his mother lived in fear of the violence of Polydectes, who did not think it possible that he could return in triumph from the dreadful errand on which he had been sent. At once Perseus went to the hall where Polydectes feasted with his friends, and, drawing out the Gorgon's head and holding it up before them, saw them glance up at it and become transformed to statues of stone, each in the attitude he had been when looking at the dreadful face. He then made Dictys king of Seriphus, and gave back the winged shoes and the helmet of darkness to Hermes, who promised to carry them back to the nymphs. The head of Medusa he gave to Athena, and she fixed it in the middle of her shield.

The grandfather of Perseus, the king who had set him adrift with his mother when he was a baby, did not escape the decree of fate. He was present at certain athletic games held at Larissa, where Perseus came to compete. In throwing the

quoit he accidentally struck his grandfather on the foot, and killed him instantly. When he knew what he had done, he would not claim the kingdom of Argos, for he could not bear the thought of reigning after a grandfather he had slain, so he surrendered it to the King of Tiryns, and received his kingdom in its stead.

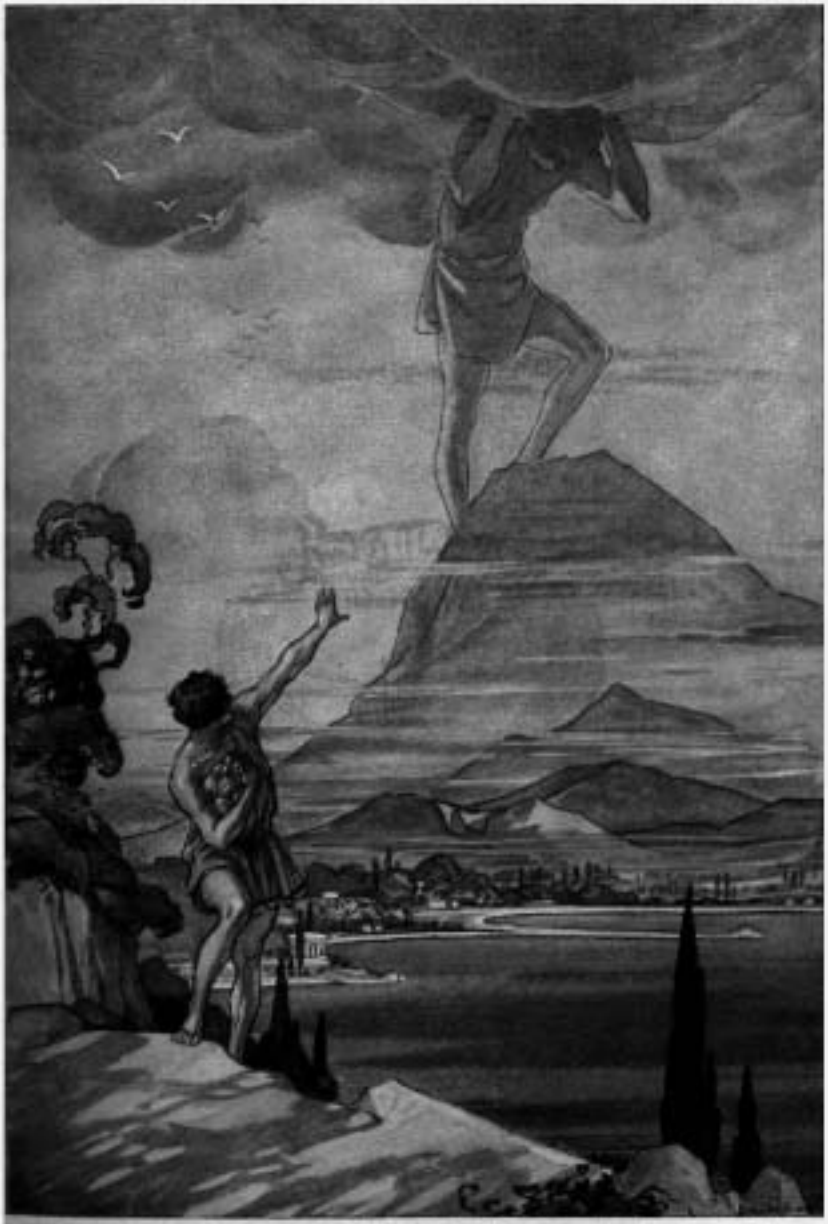
THE LABOURS OF HERCULES

THERE was no one in Greece so strong as Hercules, and it was small wonder that he should be mightier than other men, for, though his mother, Alcmene, was a mortal, his father was Zeus, the greatest of the gods, king of heaven and earth.

Hera, the queen of heaven, hated the mother of Hercules, as she could not bear to think that Zeus had loved a woman of the earth, and she hated the child, and resolved to destroy him.

The cradle of Hercules and his brother Iphicles was the hollow of a brazen shield, which Alcmene's husband had won in war. One night, as the children lay sleeping, Hera sent two great serpents to devour them. Dark and gleaming, with bristling crests, the monsters reared over the shield-cradle, darting out their forked tongues ready to strike. Iphicles screamed and kicked away the woollen coverlet, and tried to wriggle over the side of the shield, but the little Hercules, who had never been known to cry, seized the serpents, one in his left hand, one in his right, and strangled them both. When the frightened parents and the servants, awakened by the cry of Iphicles, rushed into the room, he held up the dead monsters, smiling and delighted with his triumph. That was his first feat of strength.

When he was old enough gods and heroes trained him in the accomplishments of a Greek youth. He learned to read and play on the lyre; he learned to drive a chariot, to wrestle, to shoot with the bow, and to wield a sword. As he grew to



Hercules at once snatched up the apples (page 46)

manhood his appearance was that of a son of Zeus; godlike, too, was his skill. He was seven feet in height, a gleam of fire was in his eyes, and when he shot an arrow or hurled a javelin, he was never known to miss his mark.

When he was eighteen he slew a lion which attacked the cattle he was guarding, and skinned it, and made himself a cloak of the skin, and a helmet of the head. From the trunk of an olive tree he cut himself a huge club, which was his favourite weapon; but he had others, for Hermes gave him a sword, and Apollo gave him a bow and a quiver of arrows. Hephæstus, the smith of the gods, made him a breastplate of gold.

Such honours were done by the immortals to the son of Zeus, but Hera was still his enemy, and would have destroyed him could she have done so. Through her terrible power and hatred he became raving mad, and, in his frenzy, destroyed his own children. He would have committed crime after crime, had not Athena struck him with a stone and stunned him. Then a deep sleep came upon him, and when he awoke he was in his right mind.

In the deepest misery and sorrow for what he had unwittingly done, he went to the temple of Apollo at Delphi and entreated the priestess to tell him how he might atone for his sin. She bade him serve his cousin, King Eurystheus, and perform ten labours that this king would impose upon him. If he were successful in these labours, he would become immortal.

At once Hercules went to the kingdom of Tiryns, and bound himself to do the pleasure of his cousin. Eurystheus ordered him to bring him the skin of the Nemean lion.

This lion, and the eagle that tortured Prometheus, and the dragon that guarded the golden apples of the Hesperides, were the offspring of the last child of Earth, the monster Typhœus, so huge a creature that he towered above the mountains and his head reached the stars. One of his great hands touched the east, one the west, and from each hand grew a hundred dragon-heads. Fire sprang from his eyes; his body was covered with wings; snakes writhed about his legs and feet, and stretched up as far as his head. Zeus had overcome this monster in the early strife between the gods and the giants, and had cast Mount Etna upon him, but his children remained alive, a terror to men.

On his way to Nemea Hercules lodged at the house of a labourer, who was anxious to offer a sacrifice to the gods so that his guest might have good luck in his enterprise.

"Wait for thirty days," said Hercules. "If I come, sacrifice to Zeus, the god who has delivered me; if I do not come, sacrifice to the memory of a man who has died in attempting a deed beyond his powers."

Now the skin of the Nemean lion was so tough that no weapon could pierce it; but Hercules did not know this, and, when he tracked the beast down, he shot an arrow at it. The arrow glanced off its hide, leaving it unhurt. He seized his club and strode up to it, whereupon it took refuge in its lair, a cave with two entrances. As it lay there, he blocked up one entrance and then crept through the other, and gripped the monster with his great hands and strangled it. Then he heaved it up on his shoulders and carried it back to the house where he had lodged.

There his friend was preparing to sacrifice in honour of a dead hero, but Hercules bade him change his purpose, and offered the sacrifice to Zeus, who had given him victory. This done, with the monster lion on his shoulders, he returned to the city of Mycenæ.

But Eurystheus was afraid of his strength and daring. He forbade him to enter the city. He must remain without the gates, and there show the trophies that proved his success, and hear what his next labour was to be. The frightened king not only took the precaution of keeping him outside the city, he had a great bronze jar made and sunk in the earth, as a place of refuge for himself if his cousin showed any sign of exercising his mighty strength against him.

The second labour was to kill the hydra of Lerna. This creature, bred in the marsh near the well of Amymone, wrought much destruction among the cattle of the surrounding country, and no one could destroy it. In form it was an immense serpent, and it had nine heads, of which the middle one was immortal.

Hercules travelled to Lerna in a chariot driven by his nephew Iolaus, and tracked the hydra to its den near the well. By pelting it with fiery darts he forced it to come out into the open, and then he gripped its body and held it fast. But the hydra twined round one of his feet and clung to him. He tried to destroy it by striking off its heads with his club, and directly a head fell two more grew up in its place. As he struggled in the coils of the many-headed monster a crab crawled up and bit his foot, so that, starting with sudden pain, he nearly fell. He killed the crab, and shouted to Iolaus to come to his help.

There was no hope of victory as long as the heads multiplied, so Iolaus lighted a torch and burnt off the eight mortal necks of the hydra. The roots of the heads were thus destroyed. Hercules smote off the middle head, the immortal one, and buried it under a great rock. Then he cut up the body of the huge snake, and dipped his arrows in its poison.

So he prevailed over the hydra. The goddess Hera honoured the crab which had attacked him by setting it among the stars; but her enemy, unconquered, went back in triumph to Eurystheus.

"This labour cannot be counted as one of the ten," said the king. "You did not overcome the hydra alone: Iolaus helped you."

Then he declared the third labour, which was to bring back alive to Mycenæ a stag with golden horns, sacred to Diana, which dwelt in the land at the back of the north wind.

For a whole year Hercules hunted this beautiful creature, which he must not kill, and which he did not wish to wound. But wound it he did. When at last he came upon it, it was about to cross a stream, and he shot an arrow into it to delay it, and then caught it and put it on his shoulders and returned to Mycenæ. On the way he met the goddess, and she rebuked him for having wounded her stag with the golden horns. He told her of the labour imposed by Eurystheus, and she forgave him, and he carried the stag safely to Mycenæ.

Eurystheus now ordered him to capture a huge boar from the mountain of Erymanthus, and bring it alive to the gates of the city. He found the boar in a thicket, and drove it out into deep snow, where he trapped it and carried it off unhurt.

The fifth labour was of a different kind. It was to cleanse the stables of Augeas, a king in Elis, who had a herd of three thousand oxen, and had not had their stables cleaned for thirty years.

Hercules went to Augeas.

"If you will give me a tenth of your cattle," said he, "I will clean these stables of yours in a single day."

Augeas did not think that such an achievement was possible. He promised to reward Hercules with the cattle if he succeeded in doing as he said.

Hercules made a great breach in the wall of the stables, through which water could enter, and another by which it could pass out. Then he turned the two rivers Alpheus and Peneus, flowing near together, from their courses, and brought

them rushing through the foul stables, which were cleansed according to his contract. But Augeas would not give the reward he had promised, and, when Hercules returned to Mycenæ, Eurystheus declared that this labour was not to count among the others, because it had been performed for hire.

Now in Arcadia there was a lake in a thick wood, called the Stymphalian lake. It was haunted by myriads of great birds, which preyed upon the people of that country, who lived in constant terror of them. The next undertaking of Hercules was to drive away and destroy these birds.

For some time he could not make them rise from the thick cover of the wood. Then Athena gave him castanets of brass, wrought by Hephæstus. Hercules climbed a mountain overhanging the lake, and clashed these castanets. The sound scared the birds; they rose up from the wood, and he shot at them with his arrows, and killed them.

For a seventh labour he was commanded to capture the Cretan bull.

On a certain occasion Minos, king of the island of Crete, had said that he would sacrifice to the god of the sea whatever came out of the waves. Instantly a beautiful bull swam to the shore, and, when Minos saw it, he could not bring himself to part with it. He ordered it to be taken to his stables, and sacrificed another animal to the sea god. Then the bull became fierce and wild, and no man could control it. "Strive with it and capture it yourself," said Minos, when Hercules asked him for help in performing the task.

So, by his own unaided exertions, Hercules strove with the brute and tamed it, and mounted its back, and made it swim from Crete to Greece. He led it to the gates of Mycenæ, and showed it to Eurystheus, and then he set it free.

His cousin's next command was that he should bring him the wild horses belonging to the King of Thrace—fierce animals that fed on human flesh. Hercules caught them and delivered them to Eurystheus, who, having no use for such terrible creatures, let them loose among the hills, and finally they were devoured by wild beasts.

The next quest was of a different kind. It was to obtain the girdle belonging to Hippolyta, the queen of the Amazons, which the daughter of Eurystheus very much desired to possess. These Amazons were a race of women who cared nothing for womanly pursuits, but devoted themselves to hunting and fighting. They cut off their right breasts, so

that they might swing their right arms more easily to hurl the javelin. They brought up their girl children only, training them in manly accomplishments; their boys were slain, or reared in some neighbouring kingdom.

Hercules sailed to the country where these fierce women dwelt, and was received in a friendly way by Hippolyta. She promised to give him the girdle. But Hera, whose hatred of Hercules had not one whit abated, disguised herself as an Amazon, and spread the news among the rest that these men who had come in the ship meant to carry away their queen. At once the Amazons armed themselves and mounted their horses, and in one of those swift and terrible charges for which they were famous, swept down upon the Greeks. A fierce battle was fought, and Hercules, believing that Hippolyta had acted treacherously, slew her and took her belt and gave it to Eurystheus for his daughter.

Now he was sent to fetch the red cattle of Geryon. This being dwelt on an island far away to the west. In form he was like three men joined together at the waist. His two-headed watchdog was another of the dreadful offspring of the monster Typhœus.

On his way to the western isle Hercules set up two pillars at the boundaries of Europe and Africa as monuments of his journey. A long and wearisome journey it was. At one point he was so much angered and exhausted by the fierce heat that he bent his bow and shot an arrow at the sun god. The god was amused at his boldness, and gave him the great golden goblet which, at night, bore him and his horses and chariot from the west to the east. In this golden goblet Hercules sailed to the isle of Geryon.

As soon as he landed, the two-headed dog rushed at him, but he slew it with his club, and fought with the herdsman and slew him, and, when Geryon attacked him, shot him dead. Then he herded the cattle into the golden goblet, and sailed with them to the mainland. There he gave back the goblet to the sun god, and drove the cattle towards the kingdom of Eurystheus.

It was a long and difficult journey, and on the way Hera sent a gadfly to torment the cattle, and they went mad, and some of them escaped. The remainder were delivered to Eurystheus, and he offered them as a sacrifice to the angry queen of heaven.

Now, as Eurystheus would not count the slaying of the hydra and the cleansing of the Augean stables as among the

labours, two more remained to be done. The eleventh was to fetch the golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides.

These golden apples had been given by Earth to Hera when she was married to Zeus. She admired them so much that she ordered them to be planted in the garden of the gods, near the mountain where the Titan Atlas bore up the heavens on his huge shoulders. They grew into a golden-fruited tree, which the daughters of Atlas, the Hesperides, tended. But Hera discovered that they sometimes stole the golden apples, so, to watch them and the tree, she placed in their garden a dragon with a hundred heads, which spoke in many different voices.

Many were the adventures of Hercules on the way to the garden of the Hesperides. Among other great deeds, he shot the eagle that tortured the Titan Prometheus, and unchained him from the crag to which he had been bound for many, many years. Prometheus warned him not to attempt to gather the golden apples himself, but to ask Atlas to fetch them, while he took the burden of the heavens on his shoulders.

Atlas was glad to be relieved. As he hastened to the garden to ask his daughters for the golden apples, he resolved to escape for ever from his heavy task.

He brought back the golden fruit and showed it to Hercules.

"I myself will take it to Eurystheus," said he, "and while I am gone, you must hold up the heavens in my place."

"Take the burden from me for a little, then," said Hercules, "while I put a pad on my head."

Atlas put down the golden apples and took the sphere from Hercules, who at once snatched up the apples and returned to the kingdom of Eurystheus, and showed that he had successfully performed his eleventh labour. The king did not keep the golden fruits: he gave them to Hercules; and Athena, always his friend and counsellor, carried them back to the garden of the Hesperides. For they were sacred to Hera, and it was not wise to give her fresh cause of anger.

Now came the last labour, and the most difficult of all. The gate of Hades was guarded by a terrible dog called Cerberus. He had three heads and the tail of a dragon, and his back bristled with the heads of all kinds of snakes. Eurystheus commanded Hercules to journey to the underworld and to bring this monster thence to the earth.

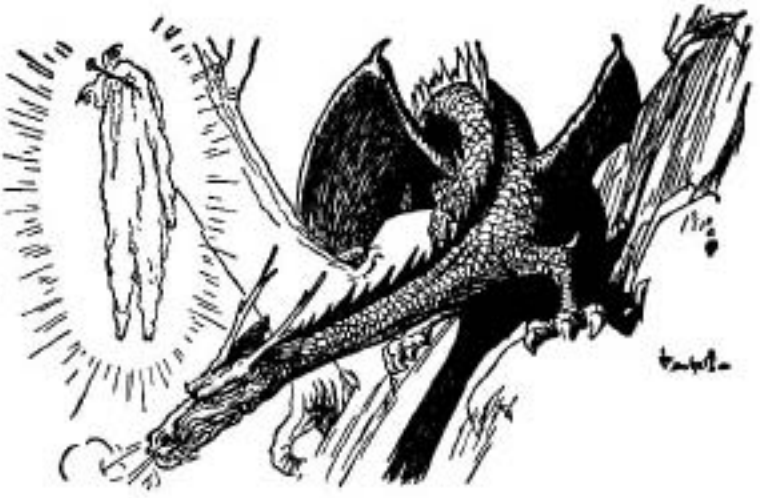
It was difficult for a living being to enter the world of the dead, but his friends among the immortals, Athena and Hermes, went with Hercules, and brought him before the

dark throne of Hades, where he asked if he might take Cerberus from his place and carry him to the gates of Mycenæ.

"Take him on one condition," said Hades. "That is, that you overcome him without using the weapons you carry."

Hercules was willing enough to agree to this. He was clad in his lion's skin and in the body armour Hephæstus had made for him, and he was ready to rely on the grip which had served him so well in many encounters with savage beasts. At the gates of Acheron he found the dreadful Cerberus, and flung his arms round the triple head; and though the monster swung round his dragon's tail, which nipped him hard, he did not relax his grip till he had forced it to obey his will. In triumph he bore it from the infernal regions to the gates of the city, and, when Eurystheus had seen it, Hercules carried it back to Hades and set it where he had found it, and again it was the watchdog of Acheron, and stood ready to devour any living mortal who should attempt to cross the dark river and enter the realm of the dead.

So Hercules completed the given number of his labours. Still he had many years to live and many great deeds to do; but when his time on earth was ended, he was received in a cloud, with peals of thunder, into the abode of the gods, and, like them, became immortal. Hera forgot her old grudge against him, and he married her daughter Hebe, the goddess of youth and health—a fit mate for the strongest man who ever lived in this world.



THE GOLDEN FLEECE

The King of Bœotia was obliged to put away his first wife on account of the terrible madness that seized her, and he married again, and had two children, a girl and a boy—Phrixus and Helle. Then his first wife recovered from her frenzy, and he made her his queen once more, and sent the mother of Phrixus and Helle from his court, but kept the children with him. Their stepmother hated them, and determined to destroy them.

She persuaded certain women to go secretly to the granaries and carry off the grain that was set aside for sowing, and to parch it in the oven. They did this, and put it back exactly where they had found it, and no one knew that they had tampered with it. In due season the parched wheat was sown. Great was the distress of the people when no crop was yielded: it seemed that the wrath of the gods had fallen upon them.

The king sent messengers to Delphi to inquire of the oracle what might be done to deliver the country from the misery of famine. The queen bribed these messengers to tell the king that the oracle declared that the ground would bring forth corn as usual if the boy Phrixus were offered as a sacrifice to the gods.

When the king heard this he grieved greatly, for he knew that the people would expect him to propitiate the gods, at

whatever cost, and prevent famine. The queen's cruel purpose would have succeeded had not the mother of the children heard of the reported decree of the oracle and received help from Hermes, the messenger of the gods, in the form of a flying ram with golden fleece.

She brought this ram to her children as they stood ready to go with their father to the altar where Phrixus must be sacrificed, and they climbed on its back, and it flew with them over the sea to a kingdom where they might live in safety, free from the hatred of the queen. As they were crossing a strait of the sea the girl slipped from its back and fell into the waves and was drowned, and the strait is called Hellespont in memory of her. But the boy came safely to shore, where he built an altar and sacrificed the ram to Zeus, the king of heaven and earth and the god of escape. The golden fleece he gave to the king of that country, who nailed it to a tree in a grove of oaks at Colchis, and set a sleepless dragon to guard it night and day.

Years passed by. Many knew of the treasure of the golden fleece, but no one dare encounter the sleepless dragon, so it hung untouched on the oak tree until Jason came to Colchis in quest of it.

This Jason was nephew of Pelias, the King of Iolcus, and by right he should have ruled the kingdom, which had once belonged to his father. Pelias had no intention of surrendering his power, and yet, like every usurper, he lived in doubt and fear lest it should be taken from him. He consulted the gods as to his future, and the oracle delivered the message: "Beware of the man with a single sandal." He could make nothing of this warning, but it remained in his mind.

On a certain day Pelias proclaimed a great sacrifice to the god of the sea, and, among many others, Jason was bidden to the ceremony on the shore.

Now Jason loved ploughing and reaping and all the work of the husbandman, so he lived in the country; and yet, remote from the gossip of the world as he was, he had heard of the golden fleece and its dreadful guardian.

When he received the message of the king he left his work in the fields and hurried to the sacrifice. But in crossing a river he lost a sandal, and arrived at the meeting-place with only one.

When the king saw him his heart turned cold, for he knew that this was the man against whom the gods had warned him. He went up to him, and began to talk with him.

"What would you do," said he, "if you were king and an oracle had decreed that a certain citizen would murder you?"

"Why," said Jason, "I would command him to fetch me the golden fleece."

"Then," said the king, "I command you to go on the quest of the golden fleece."

Jason might well have been appalled at such an undertaking, but he did not plead with the king to withdraw his command. He called to his help Argus, the son of that Phrixus who, many years before, had been saved by the ram with the golden fleece. Argus, having sought counsel from the goddess Athena, built a ship of fifty oars, and called it, after his own name, *Argo*. At the prow Athena fitted a speaking timber cut from the sacred oak grove at Dodona. Then Jason gathered together a crew for his ship, and called them the Argonauts. Orpheus was there, and Castor and Pollux, the brothers who always fought together and, after their death, were set side by side as stars in heaven; and the two sons of Boreas, the god of the east wind; and Theseus, the hero of Athens, and many other great warriors, sons of gods and of men. The strong Hercules was on board when the *Argo* was launched, but they saw that the ship cried out and declared that his weight was too much, and so he was put ashore.

Wherever their ship touched adventures were in store for the Argonauts, and at sea, too, they had a strange experience. This was their passage between the Clashing Rocks. A seer had warned them about these huge rocks, which ever and anon were dashed together by the force of the wind, so that even the birds flying between them might be crushed to death.

"Let fly a dove," he said. "If she comes safely through, your ship may attempt the narrows between the rocks; if she is lost, do not force a passage."

The Argonauts took his advice. When they saw the great dark cliffs looming up through the mist, they let fly a dove from the prow of the *Argo*. She passed alive through the passage, but, just as she emerged, the rocks crashed together and nipped off the tip of her tail. They waited till the rocks had recoiled, and then rowed with all their might, and shot through just as another huge crash was heard. They were safe, but the end of the ornamented poop of the ship was shorn away. For ever after the Clashing Rocks stood still, it being fated that they should never move again if once a ship succeeded in making the passage between them.

At last Jason came to the shore of Colchis, and beached his ship, and went to the king of the country and boldly asked for the golden fleece.

"I will give it to you if, by your own strength alone, you yoke my brazen-footed bulls," said the king. "And, when you have performed that task, you shall sow the dragon's teeth I will give you."

Jason may have thought that sowing dragon's teeth would be no more difficult a task than sowing corn in his own fields, but he was perplexed as to how to control the terrible bulls, which were of enormous size, and had feet of brass, and breathed out fire. As he brooded over the impossibility of such a task, the king's daughter, Medea, came to him secretly.

Medea was young and beautiful, but she was a witch, and learned in strange arts and enchantments. She loved Jason, and she longed to help him.

"I will show you how to yoke the bulls, and I will give you the golden fleece," she said. "But you must swear to make me your wife, and to take me back with you to your own country."

Jason willingly promised, and she gave him a drug, made from the plant with the saffron-coloured flowers that grew where the blood of Prometheus dripped on the Caucasus Mountains.

"Just before you approach the bulls anoint your spear, shield, and body with this," she said. "The effect of it will last for one day. During that time neither fire nor iron can harm you."

Jason received it joyfully, and was about to depart, but she stayed him.

"When the dragon's teeth are sown, armed men will spring up from the ground against you," she said. "But fling stones among them, where several are crowded together. They will turn upon one another in anger, and, while they are fighting, you may kill them."

Jason now anointed himself with the magic drug, and went boldly to the grove where the bulls pastured. They charged him fiercely, breathing out flame, but he remained unhurt, and yoked them as he had been told to do.

"Now sow the dragon's teeth," cried the king, thinking that the armed men would certainly destroy him.

Jason did so, and it was as Medea had said. Armed men sprang up from the ground. Warily, so that they should not guess that he was the thrower, he pelted them with stones.

They fought with one another, and he crept near and slew them.

The king was astonished and angry, for he did not intend to part with the golden fleece, and had thought the conditions on which he had promised to give it could not possibly be fulfilled. He determined to burn the *Argo* and kill the Argonauts, but Medea frustrated his purpose.

She led Jason by night to the grove of oak trees, and, having lulled the dragon to sleep by her magic arts, she herself took the golden fleece and gave it to Jason. Then the *Argo* was launched, and the Argonauts returned to their country with the treasure, and Jason married Medea, and for ten years they lived happily together.

THE APPLE OF DISCORD

One of the heroes who sailed with Jason on the quest of the golden fleece was Peleus, son of a king in Thessaly. On the voyage he saw silver-footed Thetis, the fairest of all the daughters of the sea god Nereus, and fell in love with her beauty, and longed to make her his wife. Although he was mortal, he obtained his desire, for it was decreed by fate that the son of Peleus and Thetis should be the greatest of warriors —greater than his father; and it was the will of Zeus that this son should be born.

The gods and goddesses descended from Olympus to honour the marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis, and the three Fates came to prophesy the coming of the mighty Achilles, who should do most glorious deeds on the field of battle. But one immortal was not bidden to the wedding. This was Eris, or Discord, the sister of the god of war. Angered at the slight, she went secretly to the hall of the palace where the feast was held, and flung amid the guests a golden apple, on the rind of which was inscribed, "For the fairest."

Instantly three of the goddesses claimed the apple as their due. These were Hera, imperious and stately as became the queen of heaven and earth; tall, grey-eyed Athena; and golden, sweetly-smiling Aphrodite, the goddess of love. They appealed to Zeus to judge their beauty and to give the apple to the fairest.

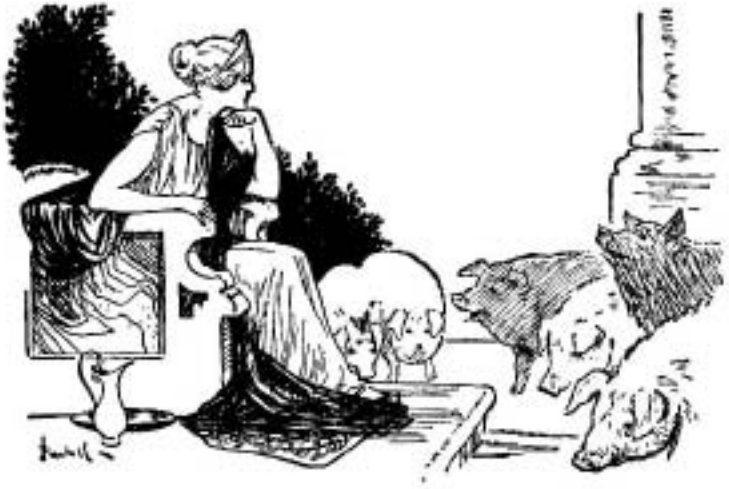
Zeus, however, would not do this. He bade the goddesses go to Mount Ida, in the island of Crete, where young Paris, the son of the King of Troy, tended his flocks in a flowery meadow by a clear stream, and he sent Iris before them to tell the shepherd prince that he must judge between them.

At noon of the next day Hermes brought the three goddesses to an ivied glade of Ida, the fair mountain which is the first to be lighted by the dawn. In their shining beauty they stood before Paris, and offered him rare gifts, each bribing him to declare her worthy of the golden apple.

Hera promised him power and honour and wealth, in Europe and in Asia; Pallas offered him wisdom that would enable him to triumph in warfare; and Aphrodite declared that the fairest woman in Greece should be his. It was to Aphrodite that he gave the coveted treasure, the apple of discord.

The goddess bade him leave his flocks and herds and sail to Sparta, where Menelaus was king. Paris obeyed, and went to the court of Sparta in splendour befitting the son of the King of Troy. There he saw Helen, the wife of Menelaus, the fairest woman in Greece and in the world. No other, however beautiful she might appear when alone, but seemed to have some blemish when set by the side of Helen. She shone out among her attendant maidens like rising dawn from night, like clear spring from the gloom of winter.

No sooner did Paris set eyes on Helen than he loved her, and she returned his love. He stole her from the king, and carried her to Troy. So Aphrodite fulfilled her promise, and so the golden apple of discord wrought its fatal work. For the Greeks, to avenge the wrong done by Paris to Menelaus their king, laid siege to Troy, and so began the great war between the Greeks and the Trojans, which did not end until many heroes had been slain, and the city of Troy was razed to the ground.



CIRCE THE ENCHANTRESS

ULYSSES was a wise and crafty leader of the Greeks in the war between Greece and Troy. When at last the city of Troy fell, and the war was over, he set sail for his own kingdom of Ithaca. But he was destined to long wanderings and strange and terrible adventures before he reached home.

Worn out with hardships, their numbers lessened by encounters with human enemies and with man-eating giants, Ulysses and his comrades came to the isle of Ææa, where the fair-haired enchantress Circe reigned. The place was then strange to them, and, after they had lain in harbour for two days, Ulysses resolved to explore it, and discover if it were inhabited by human beings.

Taking his sword and lance, he climbed a rough, craggy hill, and looked down upon the island. He saw smoke rise from a thick grove, and guessed that a house was hidden among the trees. Before he had time to explore further, a hart crossed his path. He let fly a javelin, slew the beast, and binding its feet together with a rope he wove from osiers, heaved it up on his shoulders and carried it down to the harbour, where his ships lay.

Great was the rejoicing of the hungry mariners as they feasted on venison and wine. When they had eaten and slept, Ulysses told them of the smoke he had seen above the grove of trees, and suggested that a party of them should explore that part of the island.

At the very thought their hearts grew cold and faint, for the terrible experiences they had undergone since they sailed from Troy were fresh in their memories. But Ulysses divided them into two companies, one of which was led by a certain Eurylochus, while he himself took charge of the others. They then drew lots from a helmet to decide who should go on the enterprise. The lot fell to Eurylochus.

He set off with two-and-twenty men, and they came upon a house built of bright stone. Before its gates lay wolves and lions, but these did the adventurers no violence, running to meet them and jumping up to caress them with their huge paws, like dogs welcoming their masters. All the same, they hesitated to enter. Then, from within, they heard some one, woman or goddess, singing a song of most ravishing sweetness. The sound encouraged them to knock and call, and immediately the beautiful fair-haired Circe opened the shining gates of the house, and bade them come in and rest and eat. In they all went, save Eurylochus, who, fearing treachery, stood outside alone.

Chairs of state were brought for the guests of Circe, and they were served with honey and meat and cheese and wine. With all these things were mingled the poison of her enchantment, so that, as they ate and drank, they forgot their country and their homes. And, when the feast was ended, she touched them with a rod, and instantly they were changed. They became swine, with the snouts, bristles, and grunting voices of swine, but their souls were still the souls of men, so that they were conscious of the enchantment that had been wrought upon them, and unhappy because of it.

As soon as the transformation had taken place they were shut up in sties, and there, grovelling on the ground, they fed on acorns and beech-nuts, the food of swine. But still there was one man of the company left, Eurylochus, who had remained alone without the house of Circe. He hastened back to the ship and told Ulysses of the fate of his fellows.

At once Ulysses took sword and bow, and, leaving Eurylochus in command of the ship, went to the house of Circe. He was just about to enter, when a youth of divine beauty stood before him.

"Thou art entering the house of Circe," said the youth, "and, once thou hast entered, thou canst never more depart. But I am Hermes, the messenger of the gods, and I will help thee. This herb will make thee proof against her sorcery, and when she strikes thee with her rod, draw thy sword and

threaten to take her life, and do not promise to spare her till she has freed thy friends from enchantment."

With these words he gave Ulysses a herb with a black root and a white flower, and then he flew up into the air and glided away past the island to the dwelling of the gods.

Ulysses, thinking deeply, entered the palace of Circe. He was entertained as his comrades had been. The throne on which he sat was so bright that he fancied himself surrounded by a flame, and the enchantress poured wine for him in a bowl of bright gold. No sooner had he drunk it than her gentle sweetness vanished, and, striking him with her rod, she commanded him to get out to the sty and grovel there with his companions.

At once he drew his sword and made a gesture as if he would take her life. She fell down in fear before him, asking what man he might be who could withstand her enchantment, and imploring that he would spare her and let her entertain him with every kind of pleasure. But he would not listen to her fair words or taste the delicious banquet prepared for him till she had promised to free his unhappy comrades from enchantment.

So she took her rod and went to the sty and let out the swine, who at once began to rout about looking for food. But when the spell was taken from them they appeared younger, taller, handsomer men than they had been before, and even Circe was moved to see their joy in welcoming their leader and king, who had delivered them from the terrible spell she had cast upon them.

NORTHERN EUROPE

(*ă* like *a* in pat ; *ȧ* like *a* in sofa ; *a* like *a* in ball ; *ā* like *a* in father ; *ā* like *a* in gay ; *ĕ* like *e* in err ; *ē* like *e* in me ; *ī* like *i* in mine ; *ŏ* like *o* in orb ; *ō* like *o* in go ; *ū* like French *u*.)

Ægir, *ĕ'-gir.*
Asgard, *as'-gard.*
Balder, *bȧl'-der.*
Bragi, *brā'-gĕ.*
Freya, *frā'-a.*
Frigga, *frig'-ga.*
Heimdall, *hīm'-dăl.*
Höder, *hĕ'-dėr.*
Hugin, *hoo'-gĕn.*
Iduna, *ĕ'-doon-a.*
Jötunheim, *yĕ'-toon-hīm.*
Loki, *lō'-kĕ'.*
Midgard, *mid'-gārd.*
Munin, *moon'-ĕn'.*
Niflheim, *nif'l'-hīm.*
Norns, *nȯrns.*
Odin, *ō'-din.*
Sleipnir, *slīp'-nir.*
Thor, *thȯr.*
Thrym, *thrūm.*
Tyr, *tĕr.*
Valhalla, *văl-hal'-a.*
Valkyrie, *văl-kir'-i.*
Yggdrasil, *igg'-drā-sil.*
Ymir, *ū'-meer.*

Names in "Beowulf."

Beowulf, *bay'-o-wulf.*
Breca, *brec'-ca.*
Ecgtheow, *egg-thay'-o.*
Geats, *gay'-aats.*
Grendel, *gren'-del.*
Heorot, *he'-o-rot.*
Hrothgar, *hroth'-gaar* (*o* like *o* in go).
Hygelac, *hig-e-laac'.*
Hunferth, *hoon'-ferth.*
Naegling, *nag'-gling.*
Weland, *way'-land.*
Wiglaf, *weeg'-laaf.*

Note.—Beowulf is the first long poem written in English—the "Old English" of Anglo-Saxon times. The story was known and told before the Angles and Saxons emigrated from northern Europe to England: the persons and scenes belong to the shores of the Baltic. The Geats, called in Scandinavian records "Gautar," are the people from whom part of Sweden has received its name of Gotland.

THE GODS AND THEIR DWELLING

FROM the vast emptiness where nothing existed came a world of mist, and within this world was a well from which twelve rivers rose. They flowed for a long way, and then became hardened into ice, and the rainy mist above them became ice, so that there was a frozen region. Southward from the mist world was a world of heat and light, and from it a warm wind blew over the frozen rivers, and, as they melted into vapour, life sprang from them in the form of a great frost giant, and from his feet and below his left hand grew his children, the race of frost giants whose descendants abode in Jötunheim. After the first giant, Ymir, had taken form and shape, a huge cow emerged from the warm vapour clouds, and her milk nourished Ymir. She herself licked the ice, which was salty, and, as she licked, hair showed in the ice, and then a man's head, and then the whole figure of a man, strong and beautiful. From this man was descended Odin, often called "All-father," the ruler of Asgard, and the king of gods and men.

Odin and his two brothers slew the old giant Ymir, and bore him into the midst of the void, and from his substance made the world. His bones were mountains, his hairs trees, his blood was the ocean. Of his skull they made heaven, and they took sparks and embers from the warm region in the south and made lights for heaven and for earth.

The whole region was supported by a great ash tree, the Ash of Yggdrasil, which sprang from the body of the dead

giant. One root spread into Asgard, the abode of the gods; one into Jötunheim, the abode of the frost giants; one below Niflheim, the mist-world, into the world of death. By the first root was the well of Urd, near which dwelt the three Norns, or Fates, who had power over the present, past, and future of man; by the second was the well where wisdom was hidden; the roots of the third were gnawed by the serpent of despair. By the well of Urd the gods sat in judgment every day. Among the branches of the ash, spread high in the heavens, wandered four harts, for ever gnawing its buds and leaves, and an eagle was perched there, and between his eyes sat a hawk. The eagle was wise, and understood many strange things. A squirrel ran for ever up and down the tree, between the eagle high in its branches and the serpent of despair at its root, and tried to stir up strife between the two.

Asgard was approached by the rainbow bridge Bifrost. Within it were palaces of silver and gold, and the finest and fairest of these was Valhalla, where Odin dwelt. There the gods feasted together. Their food was the flesh of a boar; every day it was boiled and cut up for the banquet, and every night it was whole in the cauldron again. Their drink was supplied by a she-goat, which gave mead instead of milk.

All day the gods fought, for the joy of battle, but at night their wounds were healed, and they were well and whole for the feasting in Valhalla. With them at the feast were the bravest of the heroes who fell on the battlefields of earth, chosen and brought to Asgard on their swift horses by the Valkyries, maidens whose task also it was to wait on the gods at their banquet and pour mead into their beakers. Odin ate nothing, but gave his portion to the two wolves that lay at his feet. On his shoulders sat the ravens Huginn and Muninn (Thought and Memory). Every morning they left him, and all day they flew about the world; in the evening they returned and told him what they had seen and heard.

Round the earth, or Midgard, was twisted a huge serpent, with its tail in its mouth. Odin had flung it into the ocean, where it had grown to so huge a size that it encircled the earth. The inhabitants of Midgard were the descendants of a man and woman made by Odin and his brothers from two trees growing on the seashore.

THE CAULDRON OF ÆGIR

"WHERE shall we feast?" said the gods, when they returned from hunting. To decide the question they spread out a cloth and cast on it divining-twigs, graven with runes and sprinkled with blood. By the way these fell they knew that their banquet must be spread on Ægir's halls.

"I will go and tell him this," said the eldest son of Odin, strong-armed Thor, who feared no man. Up he strode to the rocks where the sea god sat watching the wave-maidens, who were his daughters, swim and play by the shore, and stared at him with fierce eyes.

"Make a feast for the gods," said he.

Ægir was angry because of the harsh, masterful way in which Thor spoke.

"Then go and bring a cauldron in which I may brew ale for you," he answered.

Thor took back this message to the gods.

"There is only one cauldron great enough to hold ale for the feast of the gods," said Tyr, the god of war. "That belongs to my father Hymir, who dwells east of Stormy Billow, at heaven's end."

"How can we get it?" demanded Thor.

"By craft, my friend," said Tyr.

Thor harnessed his great fierce goats, Tooth-grinder and Tooth-gnasher, and yoked them to his chariot, and drove away with Tyr to the hall where Hymir dwelt.

The giant was hunting in the forest, but the strangers were hospitably received by his wife, who was young and fair-haired and beautiful. She brought them ale to drink, and bade them rest awhile; but she warned them that Hymir would not welcome them, for it was his way to be rough with strangers and grudging in their entertainment.

When they heard Hymir's footsteps they hid behind a massive pillar, on which hung eight cauldrons. Icicles clashed as Hymir came into the hall, his beard all frozen. When his wife told him of the guests crouching behind the pillar, he cast such a look of fury upon it that it shook, and seven of the cauldrons clattered to the floor. But he bade Thor and Tyr come out and sup with him, and plentiful fare was set before them—three oxen roasted whole.

Thor set to with a will, and devoured two of the oxen himself: too great a meal, thought Hymir, for one man to make.

"We shall have nothing to eat to-morrow when you have gone," he grumbled; "nothing but spoil from our hunting."

"I will fish and catch plenty for your supper," said Thor, "if you will give me the bait."

"See what you can find for yourself," said Hymir.

Off went Thor to the forest, where the giant's great cattle grazed. He saw a black ox, struck off its head with his hammer, and brought it down to the shore, where Hymir's boat lay.

"Thou art worse on foot than when sitting at table," shouted the giant. But Thor pushed out the boat and bade him come on, for he would bait his hook with the head of the ox.

They rowed out to Hymir's fishing-grounds. Hymir caught two whales; Thor caught nothing.

"We will row farther," said Thor.

"It is unsafe to go farther," said Hymir. "We are near the great serpent that girdles the world beneath the sea."

Thor took no notice of this warning; he rowed on, and threw out a line baited with the head of the ox. The Midgard serpent itself snapped at the bait, and the hook caught in its jaw.

"I have him!" shouted Thor, and pulled in his line. Above the waves, close to the gunwale of the boat, showed the fearful, glistering head of the monster. Thor stared at it fiercely, and fiercely it fixed its eyes on him and spat out poison. He raised his hammer and brought it down hard, and the world shook with the might of that blow and the

monster's roar of pain. But Thor was not to carry home so great a spoil from fishing with Hymir. The giant, jealous of his might, and pale with terror because the Midgard serpent was so near, secretly drew his knife and cut the line at the gunwale, and the monster sank back into the sea.

When they reached shore again Hymir angrily bade Thor do his share of the work—moor the boat or carry the fish. At once Thor beached the boat, and took it up and carried it, oars, ropes, whales and all, up to Hymir's dwelling. Hymir said nothing to that, but, as they sat at supper, he declared that he thought no man strong who was not strong enough to break his wine-cup.

Thor seized the cup and hurled it against a pillar of stone. The pillar was shattered into fragments, but the cup was in Hymir's hand, unbroken.

Again and again Thor tried to break the cup, but his strength was of no avail: it always returned to the giant's hand without even a crack or a dent. Then the golden-haired wife of Hymir spoke in a low voice to Thor, and told him to hurl the cup against the giant's head, for no metal in the world was so hard as his skull.

Thor did this. The beautiful cup was shattered to fragments; the head of the giant was unbruised.

Hymir cared for nothing now his treasured cup was broken. He told his two guests that they might take his cauldron back to Ægir's hall if they could lift it from its place and carry it themselves.

Twice Tyr strove to raise the huge vessel, but he could not move it. Then Thor seized the rim and heaved it up and over his head, and its handles clanked against his heels as he strode off below it.

He had gone some way when he lifted off the cauldron and looked behind him. Away to the east he saw Hymir following him, with a host of rocky-headed monsters. He hurled his hammer at one, and another, and another, until all were laid low. Then again he got below his cauldron and carried it on his head to Ægir. There was a great brewing of ale, and the gods feasted together in the sea god's hall.

THOR'S HAMMER

Now Thor had a hammer,* forged by a dwarf who made other marvellous things for the gods, but this was best of all. It was not a huge weapon; if Thor liked, he could put it inside his battle-sark and keep it hidden there; but, however hard he might smite, it would never fail him, and if he threw it, it would never miss its mark, and it would always return again to his hand. He valued it beyond all his other possessions, and always slept with it laid beside him.

One morning when he woke and stretched out his hand for his hammer he found nothing. He sprang up quickly, his hair bristling with anger, and searched high and low. All to no avail: it was clear that the hammer had been stolen.

He sought out Loki and told him what had happened. Loki was a mocker and a mischief-maker, and had often angered the gods by his tricks and his taunts; but he was quick and subtle, and could help any one in a difficulty if he would.

He agreed to help Thor. He went to Freya, the beautiful goddess of spring, and asked her to lend him her feather coat, made of the plumage of a hawk. Clad in this, he flew to the

* The hammer is the old heavy crushing weapon of war, sometimes brought down on a victim at close quarters, sometimes hurled from a distance, with the action still to be seen in the athletic contest of "throwing the hammer" at Highland games.

land of the frost giant Thrym, for he suspected him of having stolen the hammer.

He found Thrym combing the manes of his horses, and twisting collars of gold for his greyhounds.

"How is it with the gods? Why dost thou come alone to the land of the frost giants?"

"Ill it is with the gods. I have come alone to ask thee a question. Hast thou hidden Thor's hammer?"

"I have hidden it eight miles under the earth, and I will not give it up till I have fair Freya for my own."

Loki flew back to Freya.

"Put on your bridal dress," said he. "We two will drive together to the land of the frost giants."

Then Freya was very angry. Her breath came and went so quickly that her jewelled necklace broke and fell. Asgard might perish; the giants might triumph in their eternal conflict with the gods; she would never go to the dark, frosty land of Thrym and become his bride.

The gods gathered together to discuss what should be done.

"Let Thor go," said Heimdall. "Let him wear a bridal gown dangling about him; hood his head, and put jewels on his breast. Let him call himself Freya, and win back his hammer by a trick."

"I cannot wear a woman's gown," said Thor. "If I do this, the gods will mock at me for ever."

"If Thrym keeps your hammer the frost giants will dwell in the abode of the gods," said Loki.

At that Thor submitted to be clad in a woman's gown. A hood was drawn over his head, and sparkling jewels were put on his breast—he was robed and adorned as fair Freya might have been for her bridal. Loki put on disguise also, and called himself Freya's serving-maiden. The two mounted Thor's chariot, and drove to the land of the frost giants, so fast that the mountains shook and the earth was all aflame.

Thrym was full of joy to hear that Freya had come. He had many riches—swarthy oxen and golden-horned kine and jewelled treasures. Only Freya was needed to complete the sum of his happiness.

A feast was made ready. Thor was hungry after his journey, and he ate an ox and eight salmon, and washed down his huge meal with great draughts of ale.

Thrym gazed at his bride in astonishment.

"Did ever maiden eat so heartily as fair Freya?" he muttered to himself.

"For eight days she has tasted nothing," said Loki. "She could not eat: all her thoughts were with Thrym. She must be almost starved."

Thrym was pleased to hear that Freya thought of him so much. He leaned forward and drew aside her hood to see her face, but started back at the red angry glare of Thor's fierce eyes.

"How fearful are the eyes of Freya!" he said. "Fire seems to spring from them!"

"For eight nights she has not slept," said Loki. "She thought so much of Thrym that she could not rest. No wonder her eyes are red and tired."

Thrym was flattered to hear that.

"Bring in my treasure—Thor's hammer," said he. "Lay it by fair Freya as a sign that the marriage bond is well forged between us."

His attendants carried in the hammer and put it on Thor's knees. Instantly he seized it and sprang up, casting back his hood, and struck to right and left. All shrieked and fled: none dared withstand Thor now he had his weapon, or attempt to take it from him while he was awake. Thor and Loki safely mounted the chariot and drove back to Asgard, and Thor warned Loki not to let him hear another word about how he had worn woman's garb, and pretended to be fair Freya in the hall of the frost giant.

THE APPLES OF YOUTH

IDUNA, the wife of Bragi, the god of poetry, had a treasure which was of value to all the gods—the golden apples which made the old who tasted them young and strong once more. She guarded them in a casket of ashwood, and when she took out some and set them on the table in Valhalla her store replenished itself: the casket was never empty. Greatly did the giants covet these apples of youth, for they knew that without them they could never hope to prevail in their constant strife against the gods.

One day it happened that Odin, with Loki and another god, wandered in a wild and desolate part of the earth. They were hungry, and, seeing a herd of oxen, they killed one, made a fire, and laid it on the embers to roast. When they thought it must be cooked, they raked away the fire and found that it was half raw. They set the fire going again, and, after some time, again examined the flesh. Still it was uncooked. As they looked at one another, wondering what this might mean, they heard a voice speaking from the tree above them.

"I have taken the heat from the fire," it said. "If you will give me a share of the ox, it will roast as it should."

The gods looked up and saw a great eagle sitting in the branches. This eagle was a mountain giant in disguise, and he had the power to deprive the fire of its strength. They agreed to give him what he asked, and at once the heat came back to the fire, and soon the meat was well cooked.

The hungry gods were delighted to find that at last their meal was ready. They cut up the meat, and were about to divide it, when the eagle flew down from the tree and took two loins and two shoulders as his portion, and prepared to make off with it. Loki, infuriated, seized a long thick stick that lay on the ground and thrust at the eagle just as it was spreading its wings for flight. To his anger and astonishment he found that he was being lifted from the ground. The stick was firmly fixed to the eagle's back, and he could not loose his hold of it. Up he went, and soon his feet were struck against tops of trees and points of rocks, and his arms felt as if they were being dragged from his shoulders. In pain and terror he prayed his captor to let him go.

"I will never do that," said the eagle, "until you promise that you will bring Iduna out of Asgard with her apples."

"I promise," gasped Loki, and at once the eagle swooped downwards, and he found himself free, and dropped easily to the ground. The gods finished their meal and returned home, and Loki set his wits to work to devise a way of bringing Iduna out of Asgard.

He told her that he had found apples growing in a certain wood, and that they seemed to resemble those she guarded in her casket. He begged her to come with him to the wood, and to bring her apples so that they might compare them with his.

Iduna went with him, carrying her casket. No sooner were they beyond Asgard than the huge dark eagle swooped down on her, grasped her in its great talons, and carried her off to the abode of the mountain gods.

There was trouble in Asgard. The gods lost their strength and beauty; they began to grow old and faded and bent. They questioned one another as to what had become of Iduna, and it became known that she had last been seen leaving their abode with the cunning and deceitful Loki.

Then Loki was brought before the council of the gods, and threatened with terrible punishments if he did not discover Iduna and bring her back. He promised to do this, if Freya would lend him her feather coat, made from the plumage of a hawk.

He put it on and spread his wings and flew to Jötunheim, and found Iduna alone. At once he turned her into the shape of a nut, and gripped her in his claws, and flew off as swiftly as he could to Asgard.

As soon as the giant came home and found that Iduna had

gone, and the golden apples with her, he put on his eagle's plumage and followed the hawk, and a great rushing sound came from the fast beating of his wings.

The gods looked out from Asgard and saw the hawk and the eagle, and knew what had happened. They collected quantities of plane shavings, and piled them by the ramparts of their citadel. The hawk flew over the ramparts, and dropped down close to them. Instantly the gods fired the shavings, and the eagle, unable to swerve from his swift, strong stoop on his prey, was caught in the smoke and flame. His wings singed, he was an easy prey, and the gods slew him, and rid themselves of one of their giant enemies. Then Idúna, restored to her own shape, gave them her golden apples, and immediately the signs of old age vanished, and they were young and strong once more.

THE DEATH OF BALDER

Of all the gods the most beloved was Balder, the second son of Odin. He was fair-haired, and had so white a skin that a flower with white petals was named after him. His heart and mind were as radiant with happiness as his form was with beauty. When, one day, he seemed gloomy and cast down, his brothers at once noticed the change in him, and asked him what troubled him. He told them that he had dreamed he was to die.

When the gods knew this they gathered together to plan some means of averting Balder's doom. They decided to ask everything in the world that might have power to kill to promise not to hurt him.

Frigga, the queen of heaven, left her cloud spinning on her wheel of stars,* and took oaths from fire and water, from iron and steel, and every kind of metal, from earth and stones and trees, from all diseases and poisons, from beasts, and birds, and serpents. All swore gladly not to harm the beloved god, and it seemed certain that his doom was averted.

When the gods knew that nothing would hurt Balder, they would make him stand in their midst while they shot arrows and flung stones at him. They liked to see and exult in the marvel—that no act of violence could do him harm, that he was safe from every weapon in the world. Only one did not

* *Wheel of Stars.* This is the beautiful constellation we call Orion.

laugh as the arrow sprang away from him, and the stone fell short of him, and the sharp edges of weapons gave him no wound. That was the cunning, cruel Loki, who could not bear to see him unhurt. He determined to put an end to this marvellous safety of his, and, disguising himself as an old woman, he went to the palace where Frigga dwelt.

Frigga greeted him kindly, and asked what game the gods played, and smiled as she heard of their test of Balder.

"It is a safe game," she said. "No weapons, nothing on earth will harm Balder. I have the oath of all things that he shall be safe."

"All things?" said the old woman.

"All but one tiny shoot of a tree that grows alone west of Valhalla—a shoot of mistletoe. It was too small to harm any man: I took no oath from it."

Hurrying from Frigga's palace, Loki rejoiced in his evil heart. Straightway he went west of Valhalla and plucked the mistletoe, and returned to the place where the gods crowded in a ring about Balder, laughing as they hurled their missiles fiercely at him and saw him unhurt. But one stood aside, and that was Balder's twin brother Höder, who could not take part in the game, for he was blind. At once Loki went up to him and asked him why he was there alone.

"I cannot take aim at Balder because I cannot see him," said Höder. "And I have no weapons."

"Here is a shaft," said Loki. "I will place your hand and you may take aim, and prove his safety with the rest."

Höder took the shaft. Loki guided his hand, and he aimed at Balder, who fell to the earth dead, slain by the one plant from which Frigga had not demanded an oath.

The gods stood silent and bewildered in their sorrow for Balder. Then Frigga came to them, and asked who would ride to the underworld and plead with Hela, the queen of that place, to restore Balder to Asgard. At once Hermod, the god of light, offered to go, and Odin lent him his swift eight-legged horse, Sleipnir, and off he galloped across Bifrost, through the deep dark dales that led to the kingdom of Hel.

So dark it was that he did not know when he came to the river bounding the kingdom, and he rode straight on to the bridge over it, which was covered with glistening gold. There he was stopped by the maiden who was warden of the gates of Hel.

"What is thy name? What is thy race? Five companies of dead men rode over this bridge yesterday, and it

shakes and thunders as much for thee alone as it did for them. Thou hast not the hue of a dead man—why dost thou come hither?"

"I must ride to Hel to seek out Balder. Has he crossed this way?"

"He has crossed the bridge; he has passed along to the north, to the kingdom of Hel."

Hermod rode on to the gate of Hel, and dismounted and tightened Sleipnir's girths, and rode him at the gate, and took a flying leap over it, and galloped on to the hall where the queen of the dead had made a place ready for his brother. Terrible she was to look upon: fierce and frowning, and her skin half livid blue-black, and half the colour of flesh.

She listened to the pleading of Hermod.

"Balder shall return to the gods if all things in the world weep for him," she said. "If one will not weep, he must remain with me."

Hermod went gladly back to Asgard, for he believed that all things in the world sorrowed for Balder's death. As soon as the gods heard the decree of Hela, they sent out messengers to bid all to weep for Balder. At his name all who had loved him wept, the very stones and rocks and trees grieved for his death. Having ridden all over the world, the messengers came homewards, and passed a cave where a giantess sat. She called herself Thokk, but Thokk was in reality Loki in disguise.

"Weep Balder from the power of Hela," cried the messengers.

"The tears I weep for Balder are not wet," said the giantess. "Living or dead, I loved him not. Let Hela keep what she hath."

So Balder must abide for ever with Hela. But Loki paid dearly for his evil deed. The gods who loved Balder swore to avenge his death, and Loki was forced to flee from Asgard. He took refuge in a mountain, where he made himself a house with windows facing north, south, east, and west, so that he could see in all directions. Sometimes he would sit before the fire, making a net; sometimes he would turn himself into a salmon and hide under a waterfall near the house.

One day, as he worked at his net, he saw the gods approaching, and knew that Odin had discovered his hiding-place. He cast his net into the fire and slipped out of his house and into the river, and, in his salmon shape, lay hidden there.

The gods entered his house, and saw the pattern of the

mesh of the burnt net, clear in the ashes on the hearth. They guessed that this must be a device for catching fish, and they copied it exactly, and made a strong net, and took it to the river to trap Loki.

Twice he gave them the slip, but the third time Thor was too quick for him, and caught him in his hand as he tried to leap out of the net and make for the sea. He almost escaped—his body slipped through Thor's hand, but he was caught by the tail, and ever since then a salmon's back has narrowed towards the tail.

The gods carried him, in his right shape, to a lonely cave, and bound him with iron fetters to three great stones. Then a giantess enemy of his, daughter of that storm giant who had carried off Iduna and her golden apples, hung a venomous serpent over him, so that the poison should drip from its fangs on his face. But he was saved from the worst of this torture by the one person who loved him—Sigyn his wife. She stood by him and held a bowl to catch the venom that fell from the serpent, but, when the bowl was full and she must draw it away and empty it, the poison dripped down on Loki's face, and he would struggle with such violence to be free that the earth shook, and the men of Midgard spoke of earthquakes. So he was doomed to remain till the end of the world, and the weird, or judgment of the gods.

BEOWULF

In Denmark, long ago, there reigned a king named Hrothgar, who planned to build a great hall where he might feast with his warriors and give them gifts after they had done nobly in warfare, and, with them, listen to the music of the harp, and the song and story of the gleeman. In time the hall rose, high, with curved roof, and gables adorned as with the antlers of a hart. The king called it Heorot, the hart, and its fame spread among all the people of that country.

From Heorot great fens and moors stretched to the mountains, and these were haunted by a grim fiend called Grendel. He dwelt with his mother in the depths of a mere, shadowed by thickly-rooted trees. A fearful place it was: at night fire flickered over its depths; in times of tempest its waves would rise dark to the clouds. Sometimes the huntsmen drove a hart to the bank of the mere: it would turn and face the hounds rather than take refuge in those haunted waters.

Now Grendel heard the sound of laughter and song from within Heorot. One night, fierce and greedy, he crossed the fens and came to the high arched hall, where the Danes slept after their feasting. He took thirty of them and slew them, and carried them to his dark home.

Next morning a great cry was heard in Heorot, when the warriors saw the floor stained with blood and knew what had been done by Grendel. But their sorrow was not at an end.

The fiend came again and again, until, for fear of him, the Danes would not feast and sleep in Hrothgar's hall. Empty and lonely it stood, and the king could devise no way of ridding the earth of that grim death-bringer who came like a shadow over the moors to carry away and devour the young and the noble if they dared to be his guests.

The tale of Grendel's evil doings spread far and wide, and it was told in the hall of Hygelac, king of the Geats. At once the thane Beowulf, the king's sister's son, and one of his best men, ordered that a ship should be built, and chose out the bravest of his friends to sail with him over the sea to Hrothgar's kingdom.

The ship sped over the waves, the road of the swans, and the foam flew from its prow as from the neck and breast of a swimming bird. The Geats came to land safely, and beached their boat, and shook out their shirts of ring-mail, and took up their bright shields and swords. When the warden of the shore saw them he quaked with fear, but he mounted his horse and rode boldly down to the sea.

"Who are you that come with your shields over the waves? Never have I seen an earl greater and nobler than one of you seems to be. But I must know who you are and whence you come before you go farther into the land of the Danes."

"We are from the hearth of Hygelac, king of the Geats," said Beowulf. "My father was a noble chieftain, and almost every wise man on earth remembers him. My errand is to free thy lord from the fiend who works terror by night, and has brought sorrow to Heorot."

Then the warden welcomed them, and bade them follow him to the hall. Up the street, paved with many-coloured stone, they marched, splendid with their gold-adorned helmets, and their hard, bright chain-mail, whose rings clanged and sang together as they went. They set their wide shields against the wall of Heorot, and laid their mail-coats on a bench, and stood their spears up together, and were brought into the presence of the old, sad Hrothgar.

"Hail to thee, Hrothgar! I am kinsman to Hygelac of the Geats. I have heard seafarers say that this great hall of thine stands empty and lonely after twilight. I have slain giants; I have slain sea-monsters. And now I will meet this fiend Grendel—I will meet him alone. I have heard that he fears no weapon. I will fight him without sword and shield—with the grip of my hands. We will wrestle together, foe with foe. If I am overcome, send my coat of mail to Hygelac,

for it is the work of Weland the smith, and there is none better."

Hrothgar welcomed Beowulf, whose father he had known, and the Geats and the Danes feasted together in Heorot. Bright mead was poured into carved golden cups; there was music and song; the warriors were joyful as in the days before Grendel haunted Heorot. Only one man was ill at ease, and that was Hrothgar's spokesman, Hunferth, who could not bear that any man should be more renowned for mighty deeds than himself.

"Art thou that Beowulf who swam against Breca?" he said. "I have heard of that—how in your foolish pride you swam against one another in a great welter of waves in winter time. I have heard how you struggled on for seven nights—and he overcame thee, and reached the shore first. And for all thy great doings, thou wilt be overcome again if thou durst abide a night near Grendel."

"Thou hast said a great deal about this Breca," answered Beowulf, with angry scorn. "True it is that we dared a long swim together in the winter. We carried a naked sword to defend ourselves against the great whales, and we swam near together. For a space of five nights we were in the sea, and then a storm drove us apart from one another. A many-coloured sea-monster gripped me and drew me down, but I slew him with my sword. Another threatened me, and another, but theirs was not to be the joy of feasting on me in the depths of the sea. Nine of these sea-monsters did I slay. At dawn the waves grew calmer, and, wearied out, I was washed up on the shores of Finland. I boast not of this deed, but Breca never did better. And I tell thee, if thy spirit were as fierce in warfare as thou wouldst have me believe, this fiend Grendel would not have wrought such horror about the hall of thy lord."

Then Hunferth was silent. The joy of the feast went on, and Hrothgar's fair queen, adorned with gold, bore the great mead-cup round the hall, and greeted all the warriors one by one as they drank from it. As the dark clouds of night sank low, Hrothgar rose, and gave Heorot into the keeping of Beowulf. "Never before have I entrusted the hall of the Danes to any man," said he. "But have thou and hold it; watch for the enemy; make known thy power and thy might!"

With these words Hrothgar left the hall with his warriors. The Geats lay down to rest, not one of them thinking that he

would return to his own country. Beowulf took off his helmet and his coat of mail, and gave his word to his henchman. "So we two will fight to-night, if he dare seek war without a weapon," said he.

In the darkness Grendel came stalking over the moors under the misty hills. He struck the great door of Heorot with his fist, and, though it was made fast with well-forged bars of iron, it swung open, and he strode swiftly in, across the brightly-paved floor, his eyes fierce and flaming with anger. But he laughed to himself when he saw so many warriors sleeping there, for he thought that before the dawn of day he would have reft the life from every one of them. Quickly he seized one, and bit up his bones, and drank his blood, and then he reached out his hand to the bench where Beowulf lay.

Instantly his hand was caught in the strongest grip he had ever known among men. Fearful, he thought of flight. But Beowulf, mindful of Hrothgar's charge and of his own promise, stood upright and grasped him more firmly yet, so that his fingers cracked. He knew at once that his grip was greater than the strength of the fiend, who cried out with pain, and tried to free himself, to flee across the fens to his cave, but tried in vain. It was a wonder that the hall did not crash to the earth, so fierce was the struggle between the two. The noise awakened the other Geats, and, drawing their swords, they came to the help of Beowulf; but no weapon could harm Grendel. No longer was that magic of any avail to him: the hand of Beowulf had him in its grip, and he was sick to death with the pain of his struggle to escape. A great wound showed on his shoulder, then the sinews snapped, the bones burst. At last he fled, but he left his hand and arm in the mighty grip of Beowulf. Worn out with the conflict, he crept back to his cave below the mere to die, and the track of his blood showed across the snow of the fens.

Beowulf fastened the dreadful arm and hand, with nails like steel, above the door of Heorot, below the curved roof, and all came to gaze and wonder at it. Then there was joy once more in the great hall. The walls were adorned with hangings of gold; the feast was made ready, the warriors gathered together to do honour to Beowulf. Hrothgar gave him rich gifts—a golden banner, a helmet, a coat of mail, and a sword. Then eight horses were led into the court, and on one of them was the saddle wrought of many colours and decked with gold—the saddle on which Hrothgar himself rode

when he went into battle. These, too, were given to Beowulf, and at the close of the feast the queen gave him a golden collar, two sleeves, and a mantle and rings of gold.

That night the warriors of Hrothgar, fearing no harm, slept in the hall of Heorot, and Beowulf in another dwelling. But sorrow came again to the Danes. In the darkness the mother of Grendel, a monster wolf-woman, crossed the fens and entered the hall, and as the warriors sprang from their benches and snatched up swords and shields, she seized the one dearest to Hrothgar, slew him, and fled.

Great was the grief of the old king when the news was brought to him. Beowulf was called to his bower, and heard of how this grim wanderer over the moors had avenged the death of her son. He heard of the mere where she dwelt, the horror of its dark woods and its haunted waters.

"Let us go at once," said he. "She shall not hide in the sea, nor in the mountain woods, nor in the depths of the earth. Turn where she will, she shall not escape from me."

Hrothgar was glad to hear these words, and he leapt up and ordered his horse with the curled mane to be saddled, and rode off with Beowulf and a troop of warriors. They tracked the mother of Grendel over the murky moors, along deep, rocky gorges, and past caves where strange monsters dwelt. Suddenly they came upon mountain trees leaning over hoary rocks, and below these was dark, blood-stained, troubled water. Sea-monsters lay in the clefts of the nesses, and when one of the Danes blew the war-horn they sped away. Beowulf shot one with an arrow as it swam across the mere, and they hooked it with their boar-spears and drew it to shore, and crowded round to gaze at the grisly creature.

Now it was time for Beowulf to make ready for his adventure in the depths of that haunted mere. He clad himself in his coat of ring-mail, and his helmet, and Hunferth gave him his own sword, called Hrunting, the thruster, for Hunferth was crafty, and eager to help another to risk his life in a deed he himself dared not do. Then Beowulf bade farewell to Hrothgar, and begged him to befriend his men if he should die, and to send the treasures given to him in Heorot to his king—except the war-sword, which should be given to Hunferth, whose sword he took with him now. Then, without waiting for an answer, he dived into the depths of the mere.

For a whole day he dived through the waters. When he touched the ground he felt fierce hands lay hold of him. The mother of Grendel had him in her clutch. He was dragged

Hrothgar welcomed Beowulf (page 78)

along through the deep, and found himself in a roofed hall, lighted by a beam of white fire. Now he saw his dreadful enemy. With all his might he smote her with Hunferth's sword, but it failed him: she remained unhurt by its blow. In anger he flung it from him, and, trusting in that great hand-grip of his, seized her by the shoulder and pushed her down to the ground. But quickly she straightened up and caught him in a fierce grasp and overthrew him, and pressed him down, and drew her broad, glittering knife to slay him. But the point would not penetrate the coat of mail made by Weland, and, as she remained baffled for an instant, he stood up, and seeing on the wall an old beautiful sword, the work of giants, he snatched it down, and, hopeless of life, struck angrily at her. This weapon could wound. She fell dead, and the blade was all red with her blood.

Glancing about the hall, Beowulf saw the dead Grendel lying stretched on a couch, and he cut off his head with a mighty blow. Then a strange thing happened: the sword with which he had slain the wolf-woman began to melt away like ice under the hot, venomous blood that stained it. Only the hilt, many-coloured with precious metals and jewels, remained in his hand.

There were other treasures strewn about the hall, but he took none. Carrying the hilt of the magic sword, and the heads of the two fen-monsters, he dived up through the waves and swam to the shore, and was joyfully welcomed by the waiting thanes.

Four men carried the grim head of Grendel to Heorot, and all gazed with wonder on it, and on the strange aspect of the beast woman who was his mother.

Beowulf gave the hilt, the work of the giants of old, to Hrothgar, and restored his sword to Hunferth, with never a word of blame for the edge that had failed him. Then the bright-clad warriors went to their ship, which was laden with steeds and treasures. Soon, foamy-necked, it floated forth over the waves, and Beowulf came safely to his own land, to tell his story to Hygelac, and to give of the treasure that had been bestowed upon him.

After the death of Hygelac, Beowulf became king, and for fifty years he ruled wisely and well. When he was an old man the safety of his people was threatened by a dragon, which watched over a hoard of treasure in a cave in the side of a steep and stony mountain by the sea. A man stole a golden cup from this hoard, and the angry monster flew forth

at night and breathed out flaming gleeds * over the dwellings of the Geats, and darted back to the mound when day dawned. As soon as the king heard of this, he resolved to kill the dragon, and to do the deed by himself. In his life he had dared many things: he had fought in fierce combats; he had swum in the stormy winter sea, and slain the monsters that would have dragged him down; he had driven the dark fiend Grendel from the hall of Heorot. Now he was old, and death was near, but he would not shrink from the conflict. He went with twelve men to the dragon's mound, and bade them wait for him, and let him fight his fight unaided and alone.

He knew that his great grip, which had served him so well in his fight with Grendel, would be of no avail in a contest with a fire-dragon, so he armed himself with shield and coat of mail, and took his sword, and went towards the cave where the monster lay guarding the treasure.

But he could not approach the entrance, for under its stone arch poured a stream of fire. He shouted loudly and clearly, and his cry went ringing among the grey rocks. The dragon heard and knew the voice of man, and came raging forth, and the earth shook, and the mound seemed all aflame. Beowulf held up his shield and drew his sword, and struck the many-coloured hide of the monster; but his weapon failed him. His men fled to the wood to save their own lives—all but one, the youth Wiglaf, and he grasped his yellow linden shield and went to the help of his lord. On came the angry dragon, red and gold flames swirling about him. The young warrior's shield was burnt up, and so he fought close to Beowulf, taking refuge under his. Again the aged hero struck with his sword, but this time it snapped in two. The dragon rushed upon him, and he fiercely gripped its neck and held it firm, though his hands were scorched and burnt. Wiglaf thrust his sword into the monster's body, and the king drew his sharp knife and stabbed it to the heart. So it was slain, but Beowulf had fought his last fight. He was wounded, and the wound burned and swelled and grew livid. His blood was poisoned by the venom of the dragon.

Wiglaf took off his helmet and bathed his wound, and comforted him; but Beowulf knew that the joys of earth were ended for him. He bade the young thane bring the dragon's hoard from the cave and spread it on the turf before him, so that he might see what treasure he had won.

In the cave hung a golden banner, and so bright was its

* *Gleeds*, firebrands; coals.

gleam that Wiglaf could see the riches that lay there. Dim were the golden bowls, unburnished were the helmets, and rust-eaten the edges of the swords that had once been the joy of mighty warriors. He gathered up an armful of treasure, and took the banner in his hand and brought them swiftly to Beowulf, fearing lest he should come too late.

He found him at the point of death.

"Bid them make a mound for me on the crag by the sea, that seafarers may call it Beowulf's mound," said the old king. Then he gave the youth a golden ring, his golden helmet, and his coat of mail, and bade him use them well. "Thou art the last of my race—all have gone, all my great kinsmen, and I follow after them," he said, and died.

There his men found him, the lord who had given them rings of gold in the hall, and, tears welling from their eyes, they lifted him and bore him to his funeral pile, a mighty one hung with helmets and shields and bright coats of mail. Then the roar of flame was heard, and the wood-smoke rose black over the great fire. In flame the hero was consumed, and then they buried his ashes with the golden treasure from the dragon's hoard, and raised a mound that men might see as they passed in their ships, and twelve warriors of noble birth rode slowly round it, mourning the death of Beowulf, the best of kings and of men.

CELTIC BRITAIN

Pronunciation of certain Names in the Celtic Tales

Bran, *brăn.*
Cuchullin, *cŭ-hool'-in.*
Cumhal, *coo'-al.*
Deimne, *dem'-na.*
Diarmait, *der'-mat.*
Fianna, *feen'-a.*
Grainne, *gran'-ia.*
Lugh, *lleu.*
Morrigu, the, *mor-rig'-u'.*
Oisin, *u'-sheen.*
Tuatha de Danaan, *too'-ă-ha dae donn'-ann.*
Tara, *tă'-ra* (long *a* as in far).

FINN AND DIARMAIT

FINN was the son of King Cumhal, but, his father having fallen in battle, he was brought up by two women in the Slieve Bloom Mountains until he was old enough to hunt and fend for himself. He was then called Deimne. When he left his guardians and set out on his adventures, he met some youths with whom he tried his strength in various athletic contests. They nicknamed him Finn, the fair-haired, and he kept the name as his own.

But when he went to serve Finn the Seer he told him he was called Deimne. This old man had dwelt for seven years by a deep pool in the river Boyne, in the hope of catching one of the salmon that lay there—the " salmons of knowledge." Whoever ate of these fish would have great wisdom, and it had been prophesied that the gift would come to one named Finn.

Soon after young Deimne had taken service with him, the soothsayer caught a salmon, and ordered him to make a fire and grill it, and not to eat any of it. The youth cooked the fish and brought it to his master, who asked if he had remembered the warning, or if he had eaten any portion himself.

" I ate none," said Deimne, " but I touched it while it was cooking, and I burned my thumb, and put it in my mouth to ease the pain, and so I tasted the flavour of the fish."

" What is thy name ? " demanded the old man.

"Deimne," replied the youth.

"Finn is thy name," cried the old man. "I know it, and I know it is to thee that the salmon was given in the prophecy, and not to me. Thou art Finn, and thine is the gift of wisdom and understanding."

He then gave the salmon to Finn, and bade him eat it, for it was his. Ever after, if Finn desired fore-knowledge, or more than human understanding, he had only to put his thumb in his mouth as he had done when the fish scalded him, and the vision of wisdom was his.

Finn's body was as strong and swift as his mind, and he demanded strength and wisdom of his followers, the Fianna. They must be generous, and gentle too: never refusing to give food and drink and shelter, never treating a woman roughly or cruelly. It was difficult for a young man to prove himself swift and agile enough to be one of Finn's men. He must stand up to his knees in a pit dug for him, and defend himself with his shield and a hazel switch from the spears cast at him all at once by nine warriors surrounding him. With a start of one tree's length, he must flee a band of armed men through the forest, and if one succeeded in wounding him he could not belong to the Fianna. At the end of the chase his weapon must not shake in his hands, his hair must not be dishevelled, and not a single branch must have been snapped by his flight among the trees. Then, running at full speed, he must be able to clear a branch as high as his forehead, and pass under one as low as his knee, and take a thorn out of his heel—all without slackening speed. Such was the prowess of the champions who were gathered round Finn, the fair-haired.

Many great deeds were done by Finn in his youth and the prime of his manhood, and good luck went with him; but, when he was old, misfortune came to him in his love for the beautiful young Grainne, daughter of Cormac, the chief king of Ireland.

He sent a message to Cormac, and asked for his daughter. When Grainne heard of his wish she said she would marry him. "If he be a fitting son for thee, why should he not be a fitting husband for me?" said she to her father. But when Finn came to Tara with a band of the Fianna to claim his bride, and she saw that he was old—older than her father—she was sad at heart, and repented her promise. Among the Fianna she saw Diarmait, strong and lithe, with young blood in his cheeks, and hair as bright as flame. Apart from his

beauty, there was magic in the look of Diarmait: on his cheek was a freckle which no woman could see without falling in love with him.

Grainne spoke to a druid who had accompanied Finn, and asked him the names of the young warriors, and what they had done on the battlefield. Then she called for a jewelled golden goblet and filled it with drugged wine, and gave it to Finn and to his men, except Oisin his son and the beautiful Diarmait. When all fell into a deep sleep, she spoke to Oisin, and asked him if he were not a more fitting mate for her than his father; but Oisin, as she knew he would, turned from her and said that she belonged to Finn. Then she went to Diarmait, and besought him to take her from her father's house that night; but he said that she was promised to Finn, and he would not. Then she solemnly declared that she put him under *geasa** to take her. She would await him by the walls of the castle, and he must come. Then she went out, and Diarmait woke his friends among the Fianna, and took counsel with them and with Oisin as to what it was right for a man to do when *geasa* had been put upon him. All declared that he must regard the *geasa* whatever his own thoughts and feelings might be. So he said farewell to them, and with tears falling from his eyes because of his grief at parting with the Fianna, he went to the top of the castle wall, and, lightly and surely as if he had wings, he rose with a leap into the air and descended to the grassy earth, where Grainne stood waiting for him.

"O Grainne, it were better for thee to have Finn MacCumhall as lover than myself," said he. "Where in all Ireland can I take thee? Return again—there is yet time."

"I will not go back," said Grainne, "and I will not part from thee until I die."

"Then let us go on," said Diarmait.

They went on for a long way, and came to a grove by a stream, and Diarmait cut down trees and made an enclosure with seven doors of osiers. Within it he strewed a bed for Grainne of rushes and the tops of birch branches. Thither Finn and the Fianna and other bands of warriors pursued them. But the Fianna loved Diarmait, and they did not want to take him and kill him. They secretly sent on Bran, Finn's dog, to warn him of their approach, and Bran followed his track and crept into the house with the seven doors and

* *Geasa*, Solemn injunctions, or prohibitions, which no man could refuse to obey without loss of honour, and the risk of danger and destruction.

laid his head on his breast as he slept there. When Grainne saw the dog she was afraid, and awakened Diarmait; but he said he would rather meet Finn now than at any other time, and refused to flee.

Now Angus, the god of youth and beauty, who had brought up Diarmait in his boyhood, and loved him, knew the danger that beset him, and, with his cloak of invisibility, came to the grove with seven doors and advised Diarmait and Grainne to flee with him unseen through the hosts of Finn. Again Diarmait refused to escape, but he sent Grainne away with Angus, and besought him to take her back to Tara if he should fall in the combat.

Then he went to the first door and asked who stood without.

"No foe to thee," said a voice. "Here are Oisin, and Oscar, and thy friends. Not one of us will do thee harm."

"I will not go out to you," said Diarmait. "I will go out at the door where Finn awaits me."

He went from door to door, and those without protested their love and friendship for him, until he came to the sixth door, where his enemies were gathered, and they cried fiercely to him to come out and die. But he passed on to the seventh door, and asked who was there.

"Here is Finn the son of Cumhall, and four hundred hired men with him."

"It is by thy door I will pass, O Finn," cried Diarmait. And gripping the staves of his spears, he swung himself on them and leapt up from within the fence of trees, and passed like a bird over the heads of the host that waited outside to kill him, and, before they knew what had happened, fled from them so swiftly that they could not hope to overtake him, and did not slacken pace till he came to where Angus and Grainne awaited him.

But Finn, his heart on fire with rage and jealousy, still pursued him, determined that he should die. Many were the adventures of the fugitives, but they came safely through them all. Yet still Finn followed on their track, and at last Diarmait felt that there was only one place where they might find safety. This was below the rowan tree of the gods.

Once the Tuatha de Danaan had come to earth to play a game with the Fianna, and they had brought with them for food crimson hazel-nuts, and catkin apples, and rowan berries. All these had been gathered in Tir Tairngire. Now, as they passed by the Muaidh one of the berries fell from a bough, and it had grown into a tree laden with scarlet fruit. Those

who ate of that fruit felt well and strong: no disease or sickness could harm them, and if they were old they became young again. When the gods discovered that this tree of immortality was growing on the earth they sent a Fomor to guard it—a huge, thick-bodied, swarthy giant, with crooked tusks, and one eye in the middle of his forehead. Weapon could not wound him; fire could not burn him; water could not drown him; he would never die unless by three strokes of his own iron club. At night he slept in a hut in the branches of the rowan tree; by day he remained beneath it to guard it. The country round about this tree had become wild and deserted, for few dared to go near this terrible Fomor.

But Diarmait approached him and asked that he and Grainne might dwell near him, and he allowed them to do so, but warned them that they must not meddle with the rowan tree. For some time all went well; then Grainne was seized with a great desire to taste the berries. So keen was the longing that she could not control it, and Diarmait went to the Fomor and begged a little of the fruit of the tree for his wife.

"If she were the only woman in the world, and if she should die without the berries, she should not have one of them," said the giant.

Then Diarmait fought him for them, and managed to get his club from him, and so slew him. Grainne and he now lived where the giant had slept in the branches of the tree. There they dwelt in safety, until Finn discovered that the Fomor was dead, and guessed that Diarmait had killed him. He went to the foot of the tree, and rested there with his men until the heat of the day should be past. He believed that Diarmait was hidden in the branches, although the Fianna tried to persuade him that this was impossible.

As they rested, Finn played chess with his son Oisin. Both played with great skill and cunning, but at last it seemed that Finn must win.

"There is one move that would win the game for thee," Finn told his son. "And I dare all those who stand watching us to show thee what that move is."

Now Diarmait up in the tree saw the move. He picked one of the rowan berries and dropped it on the square occupied by the piece on which the game depended. Oisin moved it, and won.

They played a second time, and a third, and the same thing happened. One move could save Oisin, and Diarmait dropped a berry to show him what that move should be.

"Small wonder that thou shouldst win, when Diarmait helps thee," said Finn.

"Would Diarmait stay in this tree with thee in wait for him?" said Oscar.

"Who speaks truly, Diarmait—thy friends or I?" cried Finn, calling up into the branches of the tree.

"Thy judgment was never at fault, O Finn," said Diarmait. "I am here with Grainne in the Fomor's hut."

Then Finn commanded his hirelings to gather close round the tree and not to let Diarmait escape alive. But again Angus came to the help of his foster-child, and carried away Grainne, and Diarmait escaped as he had done from his grove house—by taking a flying leap far beyond Finn and his men. This was the end of the long pursuit, for Angus went to Finn and urged him to forgive the lovers, and the Fianna declared that they would not slay Diarmait. Finn followed them no longer, but he could not forget the wrong Diarmait had done him, and he was determined that he should die.

It happened that Diarmait hunted and slew a fierce wild boar, and brought it in triumph to Finn.

"Measure out the length of the skin with your bare feet," said Finn. He knew that Diarmait was invulnerable except in his heel, and he hoped that a bristle might pierce him as he measured the skin and do him some grievous harm.

Diarmait trod the length of the boar, but Finn said his measurement was wrong, and bade him make it again. This time he walked against the bristles, and one pierced the fore-part of his heel, and the slight wound festered, and so brought about his death.

As he lay dying he cried out and begged Finn to save him; for, when the power of knowledge came to Finn, he also received the power of restoring to health any sick man who drank water from his hands. The Fianna urged him to go to a well near by and bring water to Diarmait, and he did so, but he let the water run through his hands, and said he could not keep it there. Again they compelled him to bring it, but, as he came from the well, he thought of Grainne, and he let the water spill from his hands. The third time, fearing the anger of his men, he brought it to Diarmait's side; but he was too late—Diarmait was dead. And with him died the glory of Finn, for the Fianna never forgave their leader for his delay in bringing the water which would have saved Diarmait's life.

CUCHULLIN AND THE MORRIGU

THERE was no man in Ireland stronger and fairer than Cuchullin, son of Lugh the god of light. Women admired him for his beauty and for his courage and achievement in battle, and even that fierce war-goddess, the Morrigu, would gladly have shown him favour, but he had no time for love.

One night he was awakened from sleep by a terrible shout from the north. He rushed out, and saw his charioteer driving towards him.

"Why art thou here?" asked Cuchullin.

"I heard a cry across the plain."

"Whence did it come?"

"From the north-west."

"Come, let us follow the sound," said Cuchullin, and he leapt up beside his charioteer, and they urged the horses to the north. After a time they heard wheels rattle on the road. There was a chariot drawn by a red horse, and the horse had but one leg, and the shaft of the chariot passed right through its body and met the bridle on its forehead. In the chariot was a woman with red eyebrows. She was wrapped in a crimson cloak, and by her side strode a tall man, also clad in crimson, and carrying a forked hazel stick. He drove a cow before him.

"Why are you driving away this cow?" demanded Cuchullin.

"She does not belong to you or any of your friends," said the woman.

"All the cows of Ulster are mine," said Cuchullin.

"You take too much on yourself," said she.

"Now, why does the woman speak to me, and not the man?" said Cuchullin.

"You did not speak to him."

"I did speak to him, and you answered for him."

"His name is Uar-gæth-sceo Luachair-sceo," * said she.

"That is a strange name," said Cuchullin. "And what are you called?"

Then the man spoke.

"This woman," said he, "is called Fæbor beg beoil cuimdiuir folt scenbgairit sceo uath." †

"You are making a fool of me," cried Cuchullin, and he leapt into the chariot, and set his feet on her shoulders, and his spear on the parting of her hair.

"Do not try your sharp weapons on me," she said.

"Then tell me your real name."

"Why, I am a poetess, a satirist, and I have won that cow as a reward for one of my poems."

"Let me hear this poem."

"Then move farther from me."

Cuchullin stepped down from the chariot, and she sang a song full of bitter mockery of his prowess in battle. He was about to leap on the chariot once more, when chariot, horse, woman, man, cow, all disappeared. But on the branch of a tree near by sat a black carrion crow, and then he knew that he had met and spoken with the Morrigu, for she would often disguise herself as the bird of the battlefield.

"If I had only known it was you, we would not have parted thus," said Cuchullin.

"What you have said and done will bring you ill luck," she told him.

"I am not afraid," said he.

"When thou strivest with a man of equal strength and courage with thyself, I too will strive against thee."

"Then I will defeat and wound thee, and I will have no pity on thee; I will not heal thy wounds."

Then the Morrigu went back to the fairy mound of Cruachan, and Cuchullin returned home. But when the men of Ulster fought the men of the rest of Ireland, Cuchullin met a warrior as great as he in single combat. This was Loch,

* Cold-wind-and-much-rushes.

† Little-mouthed-edge-equally-smooth-hair-short-much-splinter-clamour.

whose brother he had slain. At first Loch refused to fight with a beardless boy, so Cuchullin squeezed the juice of blackberries over his chin, and made himself look as if he had a black beard. They fought at a ford above that where Cuchullin had slain Loch's brother.

During the combat the Morrigu took the form of a white heifer with red ears, and charged Cuchullin and tried to overthrow him. But he flung his javelin at her and wounded her in the eye.

Then she took the form of an eel, and twined herself about his feet as he fought in the water. He trampled on her and freed himself, but, as he did so, Loch wounded him. She took the form of a grey wolf, and again he rid himself of her, and again Loch wounded him.

Then, his battle fury increased by the pain of his wounds, Cuchullin took his *gae bulga*, which must be set down the stream and cast between the toes. It made the wound of one javelin, but it had thirty barbs, and it could not be drawn from the body: it must be cut out. With this deadly weapon he pierced his enemy to the heart.

Now the Morrigu was sorely wounded, and none wounded by Cuchullin might be healed except by his help. So she took the form of an old woman, lame, and blind in one eye, and she sat and milked a cow near the place where Cuchullin fought.

In a little time he passed by, hot and weary and thirsty. He spoke to her, and asked her for a drink of milk, and she gave it to him.

"May this gift bring her wish to the giver," said he, as he drank it; and at once the Morrigu's eye was whole.

He begged for another drink, and a third, and for each he gave her his blessing, and all her wounds and bruises were healed. Then she took her own shape and mocked him, and reminded him that he had said he would never heal her. Cuchullin replied that he never would have done it had he known her. But their enmity was now at an end: the Morrigu no longer bore a grudge against Cuchullin, and would have helped him had he needed her help.

LIGHT THE LONG-HANDED *

THE beautiful Arianrhod, wife of Gwydion, deserted her son while he was yet a baby, and leaving him with his father, went to dwell in her castle by the sea. Gwydion gave him into the charge of a woman until he was two years old, when he was so big and strong that he was able to go to court by himself. When he was four he was as tall as a boy of eight, and he accompanied his father everywhere, as if he had been a grown youth instead of a child.

One day Gwydion went to visit Arianrhod in her castle by the sea, and the child followed him. She welcomed him gladly, and he returned her greeting.

"Who is that boy that followeth thee?" she then said.

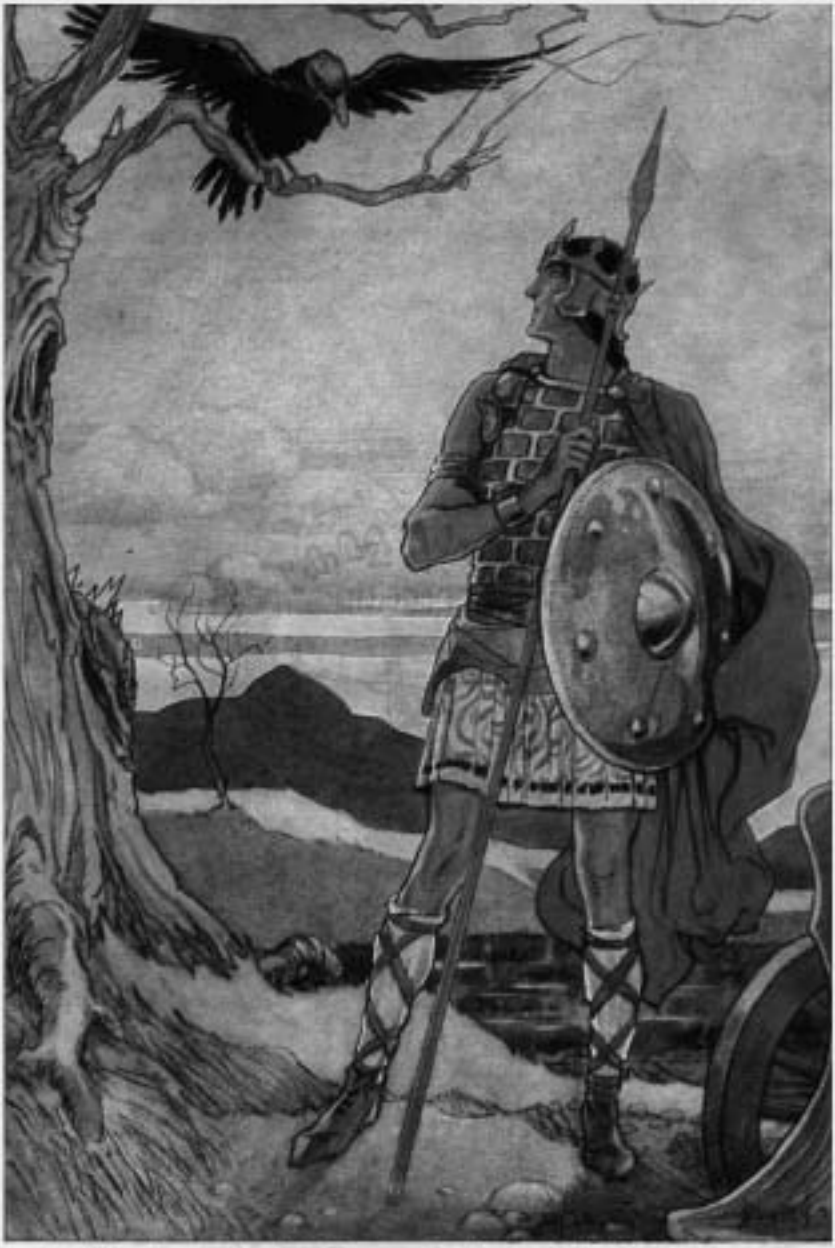
"He is thy son," said Gwydion.

She looked angrily at him, for she hated to think that his father should love him when she had disowned him.

"What is his name?" she said.

"Why, he has not a name yet," said Gwydion.

* *Note for students.*—In Lady Guest's translation this hero is Llew Llawgyffes, the Lion with the Steady Hand. I have adopted the emendation suggested by Professor Rhys, who points out that Llew is a miswriting for Lleu (light), and interprets gyffes, or cyffes, as long. This establishes a very likely connection between the Welsh hero and his Gaelic counterpart, Lugh Lamfada, Light the Long-handed.



On the branch of a tree near by sat a black carrion crow (page 94)

Then she exulted, for she knew that he would have no soul until he had a name of his own.

"I lay this destiny on him," she cried. "He shall never have a name until he receives one from me."

"Thou art a wicked woman," said Gwydion. "But he shall have a name, however displeasing it may be to you."

The next day he took the boy down to the seashore, and there he built a boat of sedges and seaweed; for his uncle, who was Math the Magician, had taught him much of his art. When the boat was ready he made a quantity of leather from dry sticks and sedges, and coloured it most beautifully. Then he made a sail for the boat, and hoisted it, and sailed off with the boy to the port of the castle of Arianrhod. Arrived there, he began to cut out shoes and stitch them, and, when he saw that people were watching him from the castle, he made himself and the boy appear different, so that they should not be recognized.

Arianrhod sent her attendants to find out who the man and boy were, and what they were doing; and they said that they were cordwainers, who were colouring leather, and gilding it, and making shoes.

"Take the measure of my foot," said she, "and tell the cordwainer to make shoes for me."

Gwydion made the shoes, and made them too large. She paid him for them, but sent a message ordering him to make a smaller pair. He made these so much too small that she could not put them on. When she sent her attendants to tell him this, he declared that he would not make any more shoes until he had seen her foot.

She went down to the boat, and found him shaping shoes, and the boy stitching them. As he measured her foot a wren alighted on the boat, and the boy put down his work and shot at it, and hit it in the leg between the sinew and the bone. She laughed when she saw the steady aim, straight as a ray of light.

"Why," said she, "Light has a long hand."

"Well," said Gwydion, "now our boy has a name. He shall be called Lleu Llaw-gyffes, Light the Long-handed, and a good name it is."

As he spoke, the cordwainer's material and disguise vanished, and he and the boy stood there in their own forms. Arianrhod was very angry, but she could not deny having given the name.

"Well, I will lay this destiny upon him," she said. "He

shall never have arms and armour till I myself give them to him."

"He shall have them," said Gwydion.

Then father and son left Arianrhod, and for many years they did not visit her again. Lleu became tall and strong, and was at a loss to know what to do with himself without the proper exercises of a man, without armour and weapons. He grew listless and discontented. At last his father told him to take heart, for they would ride out on an expedition together.

Next morning they rode to the castle of Arianrhod. As they approached the gate Gwydion changed their appearance, so that they seemed bards, both young, but he was the staider in manner and expression. They told the porter at the gate that they had come from Glamorgan, and Arianrhod was glad to hear of their arrival, and made them very welcome.

At dawn of the next day Gwydion arose and, by his magic art, made it seem as if a host of men invaded the shore. Battle cries and the blare of trumpets were heard; the sea could hardly be seen for ships. In terror Arianrhod sought the help of the strangers, and Gwydion bade her close the gates of the castle, and they would defend it as long as they could. She eagerly offered them arms and armour, and Gwydion asked her to arm his companion, and to let her maidens help him. She did this, and as soon as Lleu was ready the sound of the tumult died down, and Gwydion told her that she had given her son arms.

"Then I will lay a third destiny on him," she cried in anger. "No earthly woman shall ever be his wife."

"He shall have a wife for all that," said Gwydion.

Then he sought the magician Math, and the two of them wrought a maiden out of flowers. She was made of the blossoms of the oak and the broom and the meadowsweet, and she was the fairest woman ever seen on earth. They called her Blodeuwedd (Flower-face), and gave her to Lleu for a wife.

But, beautiful as she was, Blodeuwedd was false and cruel. She soon tired of Lleu, and fell in love with one of the gods of darkness. Her great desire was to bring about her husband's death. She knew that this would not be easy, as he bore a charmed life, but she persuaded him to tell her the secret of how he might be slain.

"I can only die by the wound of a spear that has been worked upon during the time of the weekly sacrifice," said he. "It must be a year in the making. And I cannot be

slain within a house, or without, on horse or on foot. But if I were to bathe in a cauldron below a roof of thatch, and if I were to stand with one foot on a buck and one on the rim of the cauldron, and if that spear were to strike me then, I should die."

Blodeuwedd said she was thankful that it would be easy to avoid his death; but she sent at once for her lover and told him to make the spear. When the weapon was ready, she prepared a bath for Lleu under a shelter of thatch, and asked him to show her exactly how he could stand on a buck and on the rim of the cauldron. While he did this, suspecting no treachery from his wife, the lover, concealed close by, hurled the spear at him. He gave a fearful scream and, in the form of an eagle, flew from below the thatched roof, and passed away.

But Gwydion did not rest until he had discovered him, still an eagle, sitting on an oak tree, the flesh rotting from his bones. He sang a spell to bring the bird down to him, and it came down upon his knee. He touched it with his magic wand, and it was transformed again to Lleu, a pitiful sight, nothing but skin and bone. His father carried him to Math the Magician, and in time he was healed, and slew the god of darkness who had stolen his wife and his possessions, and ruled his own kingdom once more.

Meanwhile Gwydion pursued Blodeuwedd, who, when she heard of his approach, fled with her maidens to the mountains. Looking back in fear, they fell into a lake and were drowned, and she was overtaken and captured by her enemy. He did not slay her, but as she had hated and forsaken Light the Long-handed, he turned her into an owl—the bird that for ever hates and forsakes the light of day.

EGYPT

Pronunciation of Names in Egyptian Tales

(*ā* as *a* in palm ; *ă* as *a* in date ; *ĕ* as *e* in he ; *ē* as *e* in her ; *ĭ* as *i* in mine ; *ō* as *o* in note ; *ŭ* as *ew* in few ; *y* as *y* in dye.)

Ahura, *a-hoo'-ra.*
Horus, *ho'-rus.*
Isis, *ī'-sis.*
Memphis, *mem'-fis.*
Na-nefer-ka-ptah, *nĕ-nfrē'-kă-tă.*
Osiris, *ō-sī'-ris.*
Pamyles, *pam-ī'-les.*
Ra, *rā.*
Set, *sĕt.*
Setna, *sĕt'-na.*
Thoth, *thōth.*

ISIS AND OSIRIS

As a certain Egyptian, named Pamyles, drew water near the holy temple at Thebes, he heard a voice, which seemed the voice of a god, and it said to him: "Osiris is born—Osiris the Great, Osiris the Good. Proclaim to all the world that King Osiris is born."

It was the birthday of the son of the god of the earth and the goddess of the sky, and what the voice had spoken concerning him came to pass. In the course of time Ra, the mighty sun god, lord of all heaven and earth, grew old, and, wishing to make his dwelling-place in the heavens, gave his kingdom on earth to Osiris, and he ruled it with Isis, his queen, who understood every kind of wisdom and enchantment.

When Osiris and Isis began their reign the men of Egypt were mere savages, and led a wretched life, lacking the knowledge and skill to cultivate the earth, lacking the sense and kindness to dwell at peace with one another. Soon a great change took place. Isis, seeing the suffering brought on the land by constant famine, gathered ears of wild barley and wheat, and gave them to Osiris. Then Osiris taught his people how to cultivate the earth, when to sow seed, when to reap the harvest, how to grind corn, and make flour and meal. He taught them to plant vines, and train them on poles, to plant fruit trees, and tend them so that they bore heavy loads of fruit. The people no longer suffered from hunger; they worked, and the earth yielded her plenty to them.

Then Osiris instructed them in the worship of the gods. He taught them to honour wisdom and beauty and truth; he made laws so that they might lead good lives, observing them. When his own people were happy and prosperous, he travelled far over the world, winning all nations to forsake their old barbarous customs, and to live in a better way. Never did he subdue them by violence; but by gentle words, by the beauty of music and song, he made them eager for a wise and good life. Wherever he went he brought harmony and peace, and men willingly listened to him, and learned wisdom from him.

While he wandered thus through distant lands, Isis ruled over Egypt. Now Set, the brother of Osiris, hated his brother and all that he thought and did. His heart was full of cruelty and evil; he exulted in oppression and strife. He longed to stir up rebellion in the kingdom, but Isis was wise and watchful, and she foresaw his wicked plans and prevented him from carrying them out. By neither force nor guile could he prevail against her. So he resolved to await the return of Osiris, and attempt to take his life.

At that time the Queen of Ethiopia was in Egypt with seventy-two of her followers. Set persuaded them to join with him against Osiris; he then made his plans and bided his time.

When Osiris returned there was great rejoicing in his kingdom. A splendid banquet was proclaimed at court, and to this came Set, and his Ethiopian friends came with him.

In the midst of the merry-making Set commanded his servants to bring in a wonderful chest made of precious metals and adorned with jewels, carved with exquisite designs, as beautiful and costly as a piece of workmanship can be. This chest he had caused to be made according to the measurements of the body of Osiris, which he knew exactly.

Every one exclaimed at the perfection of this work of art. When they had admired and praised it, Set, as if jestingly, said:

"I will give this chest to the man who fits it exactly. Make the test, friends—if you lie in it, and it encloses you like another skin, it shall be yours."

The guests laughed and crowded round the chest, eager to try their fortune. Man after man entered it, but it was too long for one, too wide for another, too narrow for a third. Last of all Osiris lay down in it, and it fitted him everywhere. But before he had time to rejoice in his triumph, before he

could raise himself from the chest, the conspirators rushed forward, shut the lid, nailed it down firmly, and poured melted lead over it to solder it fast. Then, as the followers of Osiris mingled in battle with the Ethiopians, and all was terror and confusion, Set secretly commanded his servants to carry away the chest and fling it into the Nile. This they did, and the splendid coffin enclosing the dead king was borne away to the ocean.

When Isis heard the terrible news of her husband's death, she cut off a lock of her hair, as a sign of her grief, and put on mourning garments, and made a vow to search till she found the chest. In bitter anguish she wandered up and down the country, questioning every one she met, man, woman, and child, but no one could help her.

At last she came upon some children who lived by the Nile, and they had seen the chest floating down the river and entering the sea. For a long time she wandered about the reedy swamps of the delta. At last a message came to her from the world of spirits, and told her that the chest had been washed up by the waves at Byblos. There it had been caught in a bush of tamarisk, and, after a little, this bush had sprung into a lofty and beautiful tree, the trunk of which closed round the chest, so that no one could see it. The king of that place, astonished at the enormous size of this tree, had it cut down, and the trunk, in which the coffin of the dead Osiris was hidden, was set up as a pillar to support the roof of his house.

Then Isis went to Byblos. As she rested there by a well, the queen's women came to draw water, and spoke to her. She spoke kindly to them, and braided their hair, and the divine fragrance which belongs to the gods passed from her hands to their hair, and when they returned to the palace the sweetness of it filled the place. When the queen marvelled at this, they told her of the strange woman by the well, and she commanded her servants to bring her to the palace.

Isis found favour with the queen, and became nurse to her little son. She loved the child, and resolved to make him immortal. So at night-time she laid him in the fire, which, by her enchantment, would consume all the parts of him to which death and decay must come; and, as he rested in the flame, she took the form of a swallow and darted round about the pillar where Osiris was enclosed, uttering cries of sorrow for him. But one night the queen saw her child, as she thought, on fire, and screamed and snatched him from the hearth.

Then Isis told her sorrowfully that she had wished to make the baby immortal, but that the spell was now broken, and, when his time came, he must die like any other man. She told her that she was Isis, who knew all wisdom and enchantment; and she asked that the pillar bearing up the roof might be given to her.

The pillar was opened, and the chest wrought so wonderfully at the command of the wicked Set was revealed. The King of Syria gave Isis a ship, and, taking the chest with her, she returned to Egypt. As soon as she was in a desert place she opened the chest and gazed once more on her beloved Osiris, and embraced him and wept for him. Then she hid the chest among the reeds and bushes, and went to the city where she had left her little son Horus, to see him once more.

Set was now reigning over the country. One night, as he hunted the boar by moonlight in the delta jungle, he came across the hiding-place Isis had chosen, and saw the chest, and knew what chest it was, and whose body it contained. At once he ordered that it should be opened, and the body of Osiris torn into fourteen pieces, which should be cast about the country.

When Isis heard of the new evil Set had done, she took a boat made of papyrus reeds and sailed about the river ways, looking for the scattered fragments of the body of Osiris. The crocodiles of the river did her no harm, and it is said that to this day they will hurt no one who journeys in a boat of this kind, because once such a one carried Isis. Nor had they touched the sacred body of Osiris. As Isis, weeping bitterly, gathered its parts together, the great god Ra heard her grief and pitied her. He sent down the faithful guard Anubis from the heights of heaven, and, with the help of Thoth, the moon god, and Horus, the body was bound together with linen bandages. Then Isis sprang into the air, lifted by wings, and hovered over the body of Osiris, and the air from the beating of her wings brought life to the dead king. He never again returned to his kingdom, but he rules and judges the dead, and Isis stands by his throne. Still they care for the living, and give rain in due season, and cause the earth to yield her increase.

It was the task of Horus to avenge his father's death, and this he did, defeating Set in battle and wounding him terribly, and driving him from the kingdom. Then he reigned over Egypt, and he was a great and good king, as his father Osiris had been before him.

THE MAGIC BOOK

SETNA, the son of King Rameses the Great, was a learned scribe, and he studied ancient writings and books of magic. He discovered that the book of Thoth, by which a man might enchant heaven and earth, and understand the language of birds and beasts, was buried at Memphis, in the tomb of Na-nefer-ka-ptah.

His brother accompanied him to Memphis. He found the tomb, opened it, and entered. There sat Na-nefer-ka-ptah before his offerings, and there beside him was Ahura his wife. Her body was buried far away at Koptos, but her *ka** had escaped from her own tomb and come to dwell with her husband, whom she loved. Between them was the book of Thoth.

"Who are you that break into my tomb?" said Na-nefer-ka-ptah.

"I am Setna, son of the great King Rameses, living for ever. I come for that book I see between you."

"You cannot have it."

"Then I will carry it away by force."

* The Egyptians thought of man as possessing body, soul (*ba*), and *ka*. The *ka* was his exact semblance, born with him, and after death nourishing itself on the food and drink placed in the tomb. Something of the same idea is suggested by our superstitions of the *double* and the *wraith*.

"Do not take it," said Ahura. "It will bring trouble upon you, as it has done upon us."

Then she told of the life of herself and her husband on earth. She told of their marriage and the birth of their little son Merab. She told of how Na-nefer-ka-ptah did nothing on earth but read; he read the writings in the catacombs of the kings, and the tablets of the "House of Life," and the inscriptions on the monuments. One day a priest mocked at him for what he read.

"I could show you where a book is hidden that is worth reading—the book written by the great god Thoth, in his own hand. That book could make you as one of the gods. When you have read two pages you will enchant heaven and earth and sea; you will know what is said by the birds, and the creeping things; you will see the sun in the sky, with all the gods, and the full moon."

"I will do whatever you wish," said Na-nefer-ka-ptah, "if you will tell me where this book is."

The priest asked for a hundred pieces of silver for his funeral, and Na-nefer-ka-ptah promised that he should be buried as a rich man. Then he told of the hiding-place of the magic book.

"In the middle of the river at Koptos is an iron box; in the iron box is a bronze box; in the bronze box is a sycamore box; in the sycamore box is an ivory and ebony box; in the ivory and ebony box is a silver box; in the silver box is a golden box, and in that is the book. All about the place are crawling snakes and scorpions, and there is a deathless snake twisted round the iron box."

Na-nefer-ka-ptah was overjoyed to hear this. He went to the king and told him of what the priest had said, and the king gave him the royal boat, and, taking Ahura and Merab with him, he sailed away to Koptos to find the magic book.

When they arrived at Koptos he put Ahura and the child ashore, and began to search for the box. He made a magic cabin full of images of men; then he laid a spell on them, and they seemed alive, and could work like living beings. He filled the royal boat with sand, and threw the sand into the river at the place of which the priest had told him, and sank the cabin, and the men worked the sand into a shoal, and raised the iron box on it. He laid a spell on the serpents and scorpions which were around the box, so that they could not attack him, and he fought with the deathless snake and

cut it in two, and put sand between the parts so that it could not close up again. Then he opened the iron box.

There was a bronze box, and, shut one within the other, were the boxes of sycamore, and ivory and ebony, and silver, and gold, as the priest had said. At last he drew the book from the golden box, and read a page, and enchanted heaven and earth, and knew what was said by birds and beasts and fishes. He read another page, and saw the sun shining in the sky, with all the gods, the full moon, and the stars.

He made his workmen row him back to the place where he had left his wife and child. There was Ahura on the bank of the river. She had neither drunk nor eaten since he left her, but had sat there like one gone to the grave.

He showed her the book, and she too read in it, and she also knew the power of its magic, and saw and understood as he had done. Now they set out for home; but, as they returned, Thoth discovered that the book had been stolen. He went straight to Ra, the most powerful of the gods.

"Na-nefer-ka-ptah has my book, and understands what is in it," said he. "He has stolen it, and has killed the deathless snake that was twined round the box to protect it."

"He is yours," said Ra. "Take him and all his kin."

Soon after this the little boy Merab fell from the awning of the royal boat into the river. He was taken from the water dead, but Na-nefer-ka-ptah read a spell over him, and, for a few minutes, he spoke, and told of what had befallen him, and what Thoth had said before Ra.

They turned back to Koptos, and the child was embalmed and buried there. Then they again set out on their journey, but when they reached the place where he had perished, Ahura fell from the boat and was drowned. By his magic arts Na-nefer-ka-ptah drew her from the river, and for a little made her speak and tell him of what had happened to her, and what Thoth had said before Ra. Then he returned to Koptos, and she was embalmed and buried there with her child.

As Na-nefer-ka-ptah again passed along the river to his home he thought sadly of his wife and child, and suffered bitter remorse when he remembered that, had he not searched for and found the magic book, they would be with him still, alive and well. "Can I return to Memphis without them?" he thought. "Can I say that I have left them dead, while I live?" Then he took a cloth of striped linen, and bound the book firmly to him, and went out on to the awning of

the boat, and flung himself into the river, and died as they had done.

That was the story told by Ahura to Setna.

"The book is ours," she said. "We have suffered for it. You have no claim to it; for its sake we have given up our lives on earth."

Still Setna said, "Give me the book."

"Come, we will play for it," said Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and he set the game-board before Setna, and they put the men in order, and began to play.

Setna lost a game, and Na-nefer-ka-ptah laid a spell on him. He sank into the ground above his feet. He lost a second game, and sank into the ground to his waist. He lost a third, and sank into the ground up to his ears.

Then he shouted in despair to his brother, and bade him bring the talisman of his father Ptah, and his magic books. Quickly his brother returned to earth, and back again to the tomb, and laid the talisman on Setna's head. At once he sprang up from the ground and seized the book, and carried it away in triumph, and, as he went from the tomb, a light went before him, and darkness followed him. Ahura wept bitterly, saying that all power had gone from the tomb; but her husband comforted her. "I will make him bring back this book," he said. "He shall bring it back to me, with a forked stick in his hand and a fire-pan on his head."

Setna went to the king and told him of all that had happened, and showed him the magic book. The king thought it foolish of him to keep it, and advised him to take it back to the tomb where Na-nefer-ka-ptah was buried; but Setna did not heed this warning, and unrolled the book and read it night and day.

Not for long did he exult in the power and knowledge it gave him. He was afflicted by terrible dreams, so vivid that they were like real life, in which he was bewitched by the beautiful daughter of a priest, who robbed him and made him slay his children for her sake. When he came to himself, he was in an unknown place, and so frightened was he that he was willing to give back the book to the man who had paid for it with his life and the lives of those he loved.

He took a forked stick in his hand, and set a fire-pan on his head, and went down to the tomb where Na-nefer-ka-ptah dwelt.

"It is Ptah, the great god, who has brought you back safely," said Ahura.

"I told you that you must come," said Na-nefer-ka-ptah.

Then both besought him to do them a favour—to go to Koptos and to bring Ahura and her little son from their tomb to that of her husband, where her *ka* now was.

So Setna went in the royal boat to Koptos, and brought them in state to Memphis, where they were buried with all honours with Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and the magic book was left in the tomb.

THE SHIPWRECKED SAILOR

A GREAT ship sailed from Egypt to the mines of Pharaoh, well built, and manned by the best sailors in the country—sailors who had seen heaven and earth, and had the courage of lions. They expected fair winds, but a storm arose and the ship was wrecked.

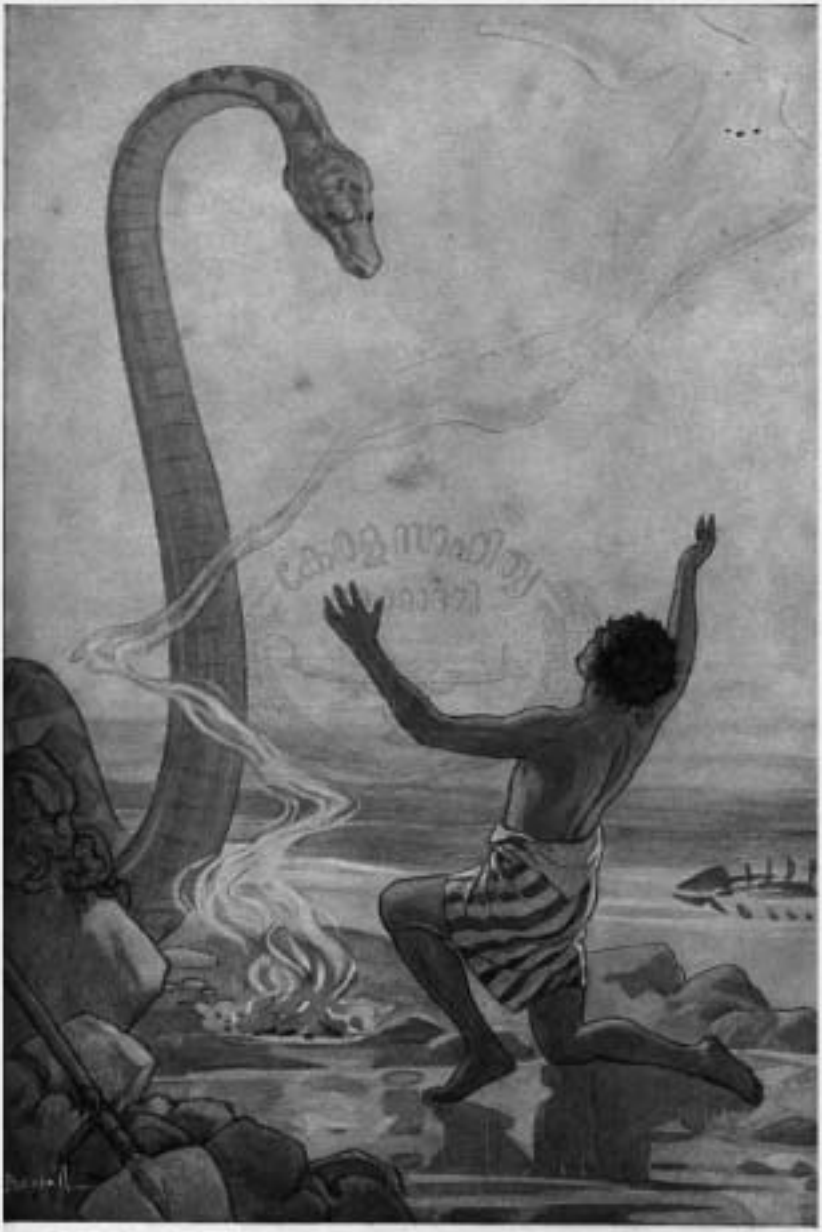
All the sailors perished but one, and he returned to his master and told him of a strange thing that had happened to him, and begged him to send a messenger for him to court, for he had gifts to give Pharaoh. At first his master was angry, thinking he lied; he then bade him speak and say what had befallen him.

"This is it," said the sailor. "When I was thrown into the sea I clung to a piece of wood, and after I had been three days alone, with no companion but my own heart, I was cast on to an island. I lay down for a little in a thicket, then I searched for food.

"Nothing was lacking: I found figs and grapes, berries and grain, melons of all kinds, fishes and birds. When I had eaten I dug a pit, lighted a fire, and made a burnt-offering to the gods.

"Suddenly I heard a noise like thunder, which I thought was a huge wave of the sea crashing on the shore. The trees shook; the earth quaked.

"Then, looking up fearfully, I saw a serpent draw near. He was thirty cubits long, his colour was lazuli, and his body



Looking up fearfully, I saw a serpent draw near
(page 112)

overlaid with gold. He coiled and rose above me, and I fell on my face before him.

"'What has brought thee, little one, what has brought thee?' he said. 'Tell me speedily what has brought thee; tell me something I have not heard, or I do not know, or thou shalt vanish like a flame.'

"Then I told him of how I had been wrecked and cast on his island by the waves.

"'Fear not, fear not, little one. Do not look sad. Here in this island are seventy-five serpents, I and my brethren and children. Thou shalt be with us for four months; then a ship shall come from thy land, and thou shalt return and die in thine own town.'

"I bowed before him, and I told him that he should be honoured and rewarded for his kindness to me. I would tell Pharaoh of his greatness. I would bring him sacred oils and perfumes and incense, such as is burned before the gods in their temples. I would bring him ships of treasures of Egypt, as it is good to do to a god—a friend of men in a far country, of which men know not.

"He only smiled.

"'Thou art not rich in perfumes,' said he. 'All thou hast is common incense. As for me, I am prince of the land of Punt, and *I* have perfumes. Of all the things thou hast promised, only oil is not common here. But when thou hast left this island thou shalt never see it again: it shall be changed into waves.'

"For four months I dwelt with the seventy-five serpents, and at the end of that time a ship from Egypt drew near. I climbed a tree to try to make out who was on board; then I went to the great serpent to tell him that, as he had said, a ship had come. But he knew it before I spoke.

"'Farewell, little one, farewell. Go to thy house; see thy children; be honoured in thy town. These are my wishes for thee.'

"Then he gave me gifts of perfumes, and sweet-smelling woods, and ivory tusks, and apes, and all kinds of precious things. And he told me that I should come to my country in two months.

"So I went down to the sea, and called to the sailors in the ship, and they put to shore for me. Before I left the island I did homage to the great serpent king and to those who dwelt with him."

That was the story the shipwrecked sailor told his master,

and again he besought him to give him a follower, and to take him to the court of Pharaoh, that he might be presented to the king and offer him the gifts of the great serpent of the island that he had visited for a little, and that had now disappeared into the waves.

BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA

Pronunciation of Names in the Babylonian Tales

(*ā* as *a* in palm; *ă* as *a* in date; *ă* like *u* in fur (almost); *e* like *a* in date; *ē* as *e* in me; *ĭ* as *e* in me; *ī* as *i* in sigh; *ŏ* as *o* in shore; *ŭ* as *u* in pull; *u* as *u* in sun; *y* as *y* in dye.)

Anshar, *an'-shar.*
Anu, *ă'-nŭ.*
Apsu, *ap'-sŭ.*
Ardi-ea, *ăr-di-e'-ă.*
Ea, *ă'-ă.*
Ea-bani, *ă'-ŭ-bă-ni.*
Gilgamesh, *gil'-gă-mesh.*
Ishtar, *ish'-tar.*
Kingu, *kin'-goo.*
Marduk, *mar'-duk.*
Mummu, *mum'-mŭ.*
Pir-napishtim, *pir-nap-ish'-tim.*
Shamash, *sham'-ash.*
Tiamat, *tĭ'-a-mat.*
Uruk, *ŭr'-uk.*

THE DRAGON OF CHAOS

In the beginning, before heaven and earth were made and named, two great beings held sway over the waste of waters that was the universe. These were Apsu, lord of the deep, and Tiamat, the spirit of chaos, who was formed like a huge and terrible dragon.

Ages and ages passed, and the gods were created, the offspring of Apsu and Tiamat. Most of these gods desired to set the universe in order, and their purpose was hateful to Apsu and Tiamat and their first-born son, Mummu, who wished sloth and darkness and confusion to prevail for ever. The three took counsel to overthrow the gods, but Ea, the wisest of all, saw them muttering together, and knew what they meant to do. By pronouncing a powerful spell he took Apsu and Mummu prisoner, and kept them in captivity, so that they should not thwart his designs.

Then a bright and evil god, called Kingu, went to Tiamat, and encouraged her to take vengeance and to destroy the gods who would disturb her repose. She proclaimed war against them, and, to overthrow their power, she called horrible creatures into being from the deep—huge snarling dragons, monster serpents whose bodies were filled with poison instead of blood, scorpion men, fish men, giants of the hurricane and the tempest. She made the evil Kingu leader of this terrible host, and entrusted him with dominion over all the gods, and laid the tablets of destiny on his breast.

When Ea saw the purpose of the chaos dragon Tiamat, he went to his father Ansar, and told him of the wrath of Tiamat and the danger that threatened them. Ansar bit his lip and was greatly troubled, for he thought that none could oppose the strength of the chaos dragon. At last he called his son Anu, who in time to come reigned over the sky, and he bade him go to Tiamat and try to make peace with her.

Anu went towards the deep abyss where the dragon had her abode, but when he saw her dreadful form, and heard her fiercely snarling and muttering to herself, he was afraid to go near and speak to her, and he turned back. Then Ansar sent the wise Ea, but at the sight of the dragon he too was afraid, and turned back. Last of all Ansar called Marduk, the son of Ea, and told him that he must go forth and fight against Tiamat, and destroy her power.

Marduk heard this command with joy. "O lord of all the gods, if I am to slay Tiamat, give me power," he cried. "Let me decree fate; let me be the greatest of all."

Then Ansar summoned all the gods to take counsel together, and they gave Marduk the right to rule the universe.

"Thou art greatest of all the great gods," they said. "None of us will question thy command."

They surrendered their sovereignty to him, and then they determined to test his power. They laid a garment before him, and he uttered a spell over it, commanding it to disappear. It vanished. He spoke again, and it was there in its place. By this sign they knew that he had great power, and rejoiced and hailed him, saying, "Marduk is our king!"

Then they gave him a sceptre and a throne; they gave him the weapons of thunder and lightning; and Anu gave him a net in which he might trammel the dragon. He set the south and the north and the east and the west winds to guard this net if he should take her, and so prevent her from escaping. Then he created seven winds who should rush with him to battle—the evil wind, and the tempest, and the hurricane, and the fourfold wind, and the sevenfold wind, and the whirlwind, and the wind which had no equal. Raising his mighty weapon, the thunderbolt, he mounted his chariot, drawn by four swift and terrible horses, and urged them on to the deep cave of Tiamat. He indeed seemed lord of all, crowned with a crown of flame, followed by the great gods who had given him their greatness.

Kingu saw him approach, and quailed before his brightness, and the monster gods were troubled and afraid. But

the old chaos dragon was not afraid: she raged in her fury and muttered curses and evil spells to herself in her cave.

"Thou hast prepared for war against the gods and their fathers," cried Marduk. "Thou hast exalted the evil Kingu to be lord of all. Arm thyself and come out, for we will meet in battle, you and I."

When the dragon heard this challenge she uttered wild and piercing cries, and all her body trembled. Marduk spread out the great net Anu had given him, and waited for her to emerge from her den, and all the fierce winds were ready to do his bidding. When at last she plunged forth she was caught in the net, and, as she opened her great mouth, Marduk called upon the evil wind, and it drove forward between her jaws, so that her mouth remained gaping wide: she could not close it. Then in through her mouth rushed all the storm winds, and, as she gasped and panted, overpowered by their might, Marduk pierced her heart with his spear. He rolled over her dead body, and stood on it in triumph. Her followers tried to flee, but he took them captive, and deprived them of their power, and trod them under his feet. From the evil Kingu he took the tablets of destiny, and sealed them with a seal, and made them his.

Then he split the body of the dragon into two halves, as if it had been that of a flat-fish, and the north wind bore away her blood. He took one half of the body and set it above the firmament, and appointed a watchman to guard it and see that the waters above the firmament did not escape. With the other half he made the earth. He made Anu lord of heaven, and Ea lord of the deep, and Bel-enlil lord of earth and the air above the earth. To every god he gave dominion, and he made the stars of the zodiac in their images, and set them in their places. He commanded the moon god to rule the nights and measure the days, and ordained that each month he should have a crown, and that, when his power and brightness were greatest, he should stand before the sun. He set his own bow and his net among the stars.

So the dragon of chaos was subdued, and order was established in the universe. Last of all, from his own blood, mingled with clay, Marduk created mankind. Then the gods gathered together and gave Marduk their names as a sign of giving him power over their powers, so that he was a fifty-named god, and he was the Bel, or lord, of gods and men.

THE GREAT FLOOD

THERE was of old, on the banks of the Euphrates, a city called Shurippak. There were many evil-doers in this city, and the great gods were angry with them, and, meeting together in council, determined to send a rainstorm which should flood the place and destroy all those who lived there.

Ea, the wise god, took pity on Shurippak, and in particular on one man, called Pir-napishtim. He came to the house of clay and reeds where this man slept, and spoke to him in a dream.

"Leave thy house and thy possessions," said he. "Build a ship, and make it great, for it must float on the deep. And in it preserve living creatures of every kind."

In his dream Pir-napishtim said:

"But what shall I say to the people? What answer shall I give, when they ask me why I do this?"

"Say, 'It hath been told me in a dream that Bel hates me; therefore I dare not remain on earth. I must go to the deep, where Ea rules, and dwell with him there.'"

Pir-napishtim agreed to this, and Ea told him to warn the people of the city of the coming rain. Then he described the way in which the ship was to be built, and the exact size it must be.

When Pir-napishtim awoke he set to work. In seven days he built a flat-bottomed ship, a hundred and twenty cubits wide and a hundred and twenty cubits high. He

smeared it with bitumen outside and pitch inside, to make it water-tight. When he launched it, its draught was two-thirds of its side.

He collected all his silver and gold and household stuff, and stowed it away in his ship. He got aboard his family and his servants, and animals of every kind.

In the evening rain began to fall. So terrible was the downpour that Pir-napishtim was afraid. He took refuge in his ship, and shut down the hatches. At dawn, looking out, he saw a black cloud across the sky, and in the midst of it was the god of the rainstorm, and before him marched Bel the warrior and Nebo the messenger of the gods.

On swept the thunder and the darkness of the tempest; before the storm-god spirits leapt up with torches, so that at times the world seemed aflame. Even the gods were afraid of the fury of the deluge; they fled and crouched like frightened hounds at the edge of the heavens.

Then Ishtar, the goddess of love and life, saw the destruction of the world, and wept, repenting of the decision of the gods. The earth spirits mourned with her, cowering low, their lips pressed together.

For six days and six nights the ship that Pir-napishtim had built was swept along by the hurricane between the deluge and the deep. On the seventh day the wind fell, the waves sank, and the rain ceased. Pir-napishtim opened the hatches, and light fell on him. He wept as he looked around and saw nothing but water: water covered the entire world.

After twenty-four hours he saw that the ship drifted towards an island. This island was the peak of the mountain of Nitsir. There the ship grounded and stuck fast. Six days passed, and on the seventh day Pir-napishtim sent forth a dove, and she flew about, but found no resting-place, and returned to the ship. He sent forth a swallow, and she too returned. He sent a raven, and she cautiously waded in the mud left behind by the receding waters; but she did not come back.

Then he landed on the mountain, and there he sacrificed to the gods. He burnt cedar-wood and incense in bowls, and the gods came to the place where the sweet savour arose in their honour.

Ishtar lifted up the necklace of lapis-lazuli that Anu had made for her, and she swore by its gems that she would never forget these days of the deluge. "Let all the gods come

hither," said she, " all but Bel, who sent this rainstorm and destroyed the people of the world."

But Bel came with the rest, and when he saw the ship he was filled with anger.

" Who has escaped ? " said he. " It was my will that none should survive this flood."

" Who but Ea could have brought this to pass ? " said the tempest god.

" O Bel," said Ea, " thou art the warrior of the gods. But why didst thou bring so great an evil upon man ? Punish the wicked for the wrong they do, but do not destroy all men for the sin of a few. And may there never again be a deluge upon the earth. Let lions and tigers devour men, let famine and pestilence smite the land, but never again bring a deluge on the earth."

Then he declared that he had not told the secret of the gods to any man, but that he had sent a dream to Pir-napishtim, which had warned him of what they had decreed.

Bel listened to his pleading words, and stepped aboard the ship, and took Pir-napishtim by the hand. He blessed both him and his wife, and he gave them a gift. " In the past Pir-napishtim was a man," said he. " Now he and his wife shall be as gods. They shall live apart from men, in an island beyond the joining of the great rivers, beyond the sea of death."

So Pir-napishtim and his wife were made immortal, and dwelt on an island to which no other living man came, save only the hero Gilgamesh when on his eager quest for the boon of everlasting life.

GILGAMESH AND THE PLANT OF LIFE

GILGAMESH was the lord of the walled city of Uruk. He was a man of great strength and valour, but his mightiest deeds were not done till his friend Ea-bani fought by his side and helped him.

At first it seemed decreed that Ea-bani should be his enemy. This man was like a wild creature, roaming in the woods, drinking with cattle from the troughs, and eating grass and herbs with the gazelles. Gilgamesh sent a huntsman to snare him and bring him to Uruk. Three times the huntsman saw him drinking with the cattle; three times did he fail to catch him. Then Gilgamesh sent a beautiful woman to his drinking-place, and, when he saw her, he forsook his life in the woods and the beasts that had been his companions, and followed her to the city, for he wished to be with her always.

When he heard men speak of the strength of Gilgamesh, he desired to fight with him and prove himself the better man. But Shamash, the god of the sun, appeared to him in a dream, and told him that he himself was the protector of the lord of Uruk, and that the gods Anu, Bel, and Ea had given him wisdom. It would be folly to try to overthrow him; the better course would be to seek his friendship, which would bring with it honour and renown.

So Ea-bani went to the court of Gilgamesh, who, warned by the sun god of his coming, received him gladly. At that

time the powerful king Khumbaba threatened the city of Uruk. The two strong men, Gilgamesh the warrior king and Ea-bani the wild creature from the woods, went together to the fortress of the enemy, which was built in a grove where a wonderful cedar grew. They slew him, and returned in triumph to the city.

Now Gilgamesh took off his bloodstained garb of war and put on a royal robe, and crowned himself with a bright crown. When the goddess Ishtar saw his strength and his beauty she loved him, and came to him in his palace, and promised him great riches and renown in return for his love.

"My house is among groves of fragrant cedars," she told him. "Thou shalt have great horses, swift and strong, and a chariot of lapis-lazuli and gold, with wheels of gold. Every king and prince of the earth shall bow down at thy feet, and every people of the earth shall do thee homage."

Now the love of the beautiful Ishtar always brought sorrow to her beloved, and the young king feared it.

"How long will all this splendour of thy love last?" said he. "Each year Tammuz, thy first lover, weeps for thee. Thou didst love the brightly-coloured bird, and thou didst crush him and break his wings, and he stands in the wood and cries, 'O my wings.' Thou didst love the strong lion, and snared him. Thou didst love the horse, and put harness on him, and forced him to speed on when he was wearied and thirsty. Thou didst love the shepherd, and he sacrificed his lambs to thee, and thou didst change him into a jackal, and his herdsman drove him away, and his dogs tore him to pieces. If thou lovest me, I shall suffer with all whom thou hast loved."

When Ishtar heard these words she was enraged with the warrior, whom she loved, and who would have none of her love. She flew to her father, Anu, and, at her entreaty, he created a huge and fierce bull, which he sent to destroy the lord of Uruk. But the two friends went out against it, and fought with it. Ea-bani took it by the tail, and Gilgamesh pierced it to the heart with his spear.

Then Ishtar, in her anger, cursed Gilgamesh. Ea-bani, who feared nothing, defied her, and declared that he would overcome her as they had overcome the bull; whereupon she cursed him also.

Gilgamesh dedicated the horns of the bull to the sun god, and gave a gift of precious stones and oil to the temple. A great festival of rejoicing was held in Uruk. But in a few

days Ea-bani fell ill and died, and Gilgamesh was stricken with a dreadful disease.

In despair at the thought that he would die like his friend Ea-bani, he resolved to go to Pir-napishtim, the man who had been saved from the great flood, and whom Bel had made immortal. From him he would obtain the secret of life, and he would heal himself and raise Ea-bani from the dead.

Pir-napishtim dwelt far away beyond the meeting-place of the great rivers, on an island unvisited by mortal man. It was a long and difficult journey that Gilgamesh undertook alone. He passed through a chasm where fierce lions lurked, and came to the sunset mountain which divided the land of the living from the land of the dead. Its peak rose to the clouds, and its foundations were in the underworld. Through it ran a dark passage, and the door to this passage was shut, and it was guarded by two monsters like those created by the old dragon of chaos to fight against the gods—a scorpion man and a scorpion woman.

Gilgamesh was terribly afraid of these monsters, but they did him no harm. The scorpion man spoke kindly to him, and opened the door, and let him pass through the dark passage to the underworld.

For a day and a night he stumbled blindly through the darkness, and then he found himself in light once more—in the light of a garden, where grew a tree with leaves of lapis-lazuli and clusters of jewels hanging like fruit from its boughs. He did not delay there, but hurried on till he came to the shore of the sea of death, where the maiden Sabitu had her palace. When she saw him approach, she shut the gates and would not let him enter. In answer to his entreaties she opened them once more, but she gave him no hope of crossing to the island where Pir-napishtim dwelt.

"Shamash has crossed, but what man can hope to do it?" she said. "There has never been a way over the waters of death. When the gods made man, they made death. Therefore forget evil and misery; take all the gladness there is for thee in life."

Still Gilgamesh implored her to tell him how he might attempt to cross to the island, and at last she told him to go to the sailor Ardi-ea, who had served Pir-napishtim, and ask for his help.

Ardi-ea needed a helm for his boat, and Gilgamesh made one from a tree. With much danger and difficulty, on account of the strong currents, they crossed the sea to the island of

Pir-napishtim, who saw their approach with amazement, and came to the shore to greet them.

Gilgamesh told the story of his friend's death and of his own affliction, and his fear that he too must die. Pir-napishtim answered that such was the destiny of man.

"As long as men build houses, as long as they love and hate one another, as long as the rivers flow into the sea, so long must death endure," said he.

"But how is it that thou livest?" demanded Gilgamesh. "As I am, so art thou. Tell me the secret of thy life."

So Pir-napishtim told him the story of the great flood, and of how Bel had rescued him and made him immortal. Then, pitying his illness, he told him to remain in the boat and sleep. Gilgamesh sat there, and sleep came over him like a storm cloud.

Pir-napishtim called his wife.

"See the man who desires eternal life," said he. "Sleep has fallen on him like a storm cloud."

"Give him the charm-root," said she. "Let him gain health and strength, and send him back to his own country."

Pir-napishtim, who pitied the sufferings of Gilgamesh, told her to prepare the magic food. She did so, and gave it to him as he slept. He awoke feeling well and strong, though his disease was not healed. Pir-napishtim told the ferryman to carry him to a fountain of healing. When he was washed in its water the dreadful sores on his body disappeared, and he was as he had been before the curse of Ishtar fell upon him.

Then Pir-napishtim told him of the plant of life, the object of his quest. It was called by a name that meant *The old man becomes young*, and it would give the man who ate of it youthful strength and life for ever.

The ferryman took him to the place where it grew, and he joyfully plucked it, and boasted of the happiness that would be his when he had tasted it and its magic power had worked upon him. But, as he drew water from a spring, a great serpent crept from its hiding-place and snatched it from him and disappeared. So he lost his hope of immortality. There was no chance of regaining the lost plant of life, and he returned sorrowfully to Uruk, restored to health, but deprived of the precious treasure of everlasting life.

Still he thought of death, and grieved for his lost friend, Ea-bani, and wondered what might be his joys or his sufferings in the land where he now dwelt. He wandered from temple

to temple, beseeching the gods to let him see and speak with his friend once more.

At last Nergal, the god of death, took pity on him. He commanded the grave to open, and the spirit of Ea-bani arose like a gust of wind.

"Tell me, O my friend, tell me of the world whence you come," cried Gilgamesh.

"If I were to tell thee, thou wouldst weep," said Ea-bani.

"Let me weep, but tell me, let me know," said Gilgamesh.

So Ea-bani told him of the sad land where he dwelt. There was no joy there, but those who were loved and honoured by their friends on earth did not suffer as those who were forgotten and left unburied, and for whom no one mourned. Then he vanished—and so ended the endeavour of Gilgamesh to discover the secret of life and death.

INDIA

Pronunciation of Hindu Names

(*ă* almost like *u* in fur; *ai* like *i* in high; *ā* like *a* in palm; *e* like *a* in late; *ī* like *e* in he; *ō* like *o* in shore; *ü* like *u* in pull; *u* like *u* in sun.)

Agni, *ăg'-nee.*
Bhima, *bhee'-ma.*
Damayanti, *dăm-a-yănt'-ee.*
Indra, *ĭn'-dră.*
Kali, *kā'-lee.*
Lakshmi, *lăksh'-mee.*
Nala, *nă'-lă.*
Pushkara, *push'-kă-ră.*
Rahu, *rā'-hu.*
Rituparna, *rĭt-u-pär'-nă.*
Shiva, *shiv'-ă.*
Varuna, *vă'-roo-nă.*
Vishnu, *vish'-noo.*
Yama, *yă'-mă.*

Swayamvara, the ceremony of the maiden's marriage choice, is pronounced *swăyăm'vără*; Mahabharata, the name of the epic from which the following stories are taken, is *măhă'bhă'rătă.*

THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

For many, many years the gods and the demons had striven together. The great Indra commanded the gods, and Vishnu, the preserver, gave them strength and encouragement; but they knew that they would never prevail in the long struggle without amrita, which would give those who tasted it eternal life. They determined to churn the ocean in order to obtain this magical food. The demons were to help them, but they resolved that, when the amrita appeared, they would seize it and keep it for themselves.

It was necessary to contrive a huge churn for this task. The gods chose a mountain for the churning-stick, and Vishnu asked the king of the serpents to uproot it from its place. Then they went to the shores of the ocean.

"O Ocean, our desire is to churn thy waters for amrita," they said.

"Be it so," said the ocean. "I shall have a share of the amrita, so I can bear to have my waters tossed and beaten by the mountain."

Then the gods went to the king of the tortoises, and asked him to support the mountain. He agreed, and Indra set it on his massive shell. There was the churning-stick in place, and for the rope they took the great serpent king, and twined him about the mountain, the gods holding his head and the demons his tail. Then the task of churning began.

Great volumes of vapour poured from the serpent's mouth and formed clouds which broke into rain, and this cooled those who toiled at the churn, and, as the mountain whirled about, blossoms were swept from the trees, and these fell thickly about them and refreshed them with their sweet scent. As the work went on, a huge roar came from the ocean, as if the whole universe fell to pieces. The great fishes and monsters of the deep were crushed by the churning, and trees were torn up by the roots from the mountain-side, and, sweeping through the air like birds, fell into the sea. Then the mountain burst into flames, but Indra caused showers of rain to extinguish them. As the sea thickened, it was flavoured with the gums of trees and the juices of herbs torn from the mountain woods and cast into the water.

The gods grew weary, but Vishnu gave them strength to go on. After a while the moon ascended from the sea. Then arose Lakshmi, the goddess of love, and the white horse of Vishnu, and the jewel he wears on his breast. Next came the physician of the gods, bearing a white goblet filled to the brim with amrita.

"The gods have taken everything else," cried the demons. "We will have the physician."

Then an elephant emerged from the sea, a great white beast with four tusks, and this Indra took for himself. Still the churning went on apace, until blue poison appeared and began to spread like a flame over the earth. Shiva, the destroyer of evil and disease, swallowed it and kept it in his throat. After that time he was surnamed "the blue-throated."

The demons now demanded the divine amrita and the golden goddess of love, and threatened to fight against the gods to establish their claim. Whereupon Vishnu took the form of a fair nymph lovelier than Lakshmi herself, and the demons were so charmed by her that they lost their senses, and gave her the amrita. So it came into the possession of the gods; but the demons were not easily baffled. One of them, called Rahu, made himself appear as a god, in order to drink it. But as he sipped it the sun and the moon saw him and cried out to Vishnu, who seized his discus and flung it at the thief and cut off his great head, which, made immortal by the amrita he had tasted, rose up to the clouds, uttering dreadful cries.

Then the gods and the demons fought for the amrita, and, after a long and dreadful battle, the gods were victorious. They put back the mountain they had used as a churning-

stick, and, shouting with triumph, returned to their homes with the amrita, while the defeated demons hid themselves in the depths of the earth and the sea. But the quarrel between the would-be thief and those who informed against him is everlasting. From that day to this Rahu's head, with its great gaping mouth, has followed the moon and the sun, and, when it swallows one or the other, men on earth talk of eclipses.

NALA AND DAMAYANTI

I

Long ago a great king called Nala reigned over one of the states of India. He had all the qualities of a good ruler: he was wise and brave and truthful; his own passions were under his control; he was skilful in the use of the bow, and in taming and driving horses.

The neighbouring state was governed by Bhima, who was also a great and wise rajah. Now Bhima had a daughter, Damayanti, so lovely that even the gods marvelled at her beauty, which was as that of the queen of heaven herself. The ladies of Bhima's court were for ever praising Nala, that tiger among rajahs, and Nala was for ever hearing about the beauty of Damayanti, so it came to pass that the two loved one another before they met, for what was said of their good qualities.

One day, as Nala wandered in the gardens of his palace, thinking of Damayanti, he came across a flock of swans with golden wings. Softly he stole up and seized one, whereupon it cried out to him in a human voice and implored him to spare its life, and it would fly to the next kingdom and praise him to Damayanti in such a way that she would desire him, and him only, for her husband.

Nala let the swan go, and it flew away with the others to the gardens of Bhima's palace. When Damayanti and her

maidens saw the lovely birds with their wings shining with gold they tried to catch them, each following one. Suddenly the swan Damayanti pursued turned and spoke to her, and told her of Nala, the young rajah who had not an equal upon earth, and declared that if she were to wed him the marriage would be a perfect one, between the fairest of women and the bravest and handsomest of men. "The union of the best with the best is happy," it said.

"Speak thus to Nala," said the princess. And the swan promised to do so, and flew back to Nala's court.

Now Damayanti grew pale and thin and sad, thinking of Nala. Then Bhima called all the great rajahs on earth to come to the swayamvara of his daughter, the ceremony at which she should choose a husband from her guests. Soon the whole kingdom was filled with the sound of the roar of elephants and the neighing of horses and the rattling of chariot wheels, so many rich and powerful princes came to try to win the favour of the beautiful Damayanti. With them came their attendants, splendid in golden ornaments and garlands of flowers. But Damayanti thought day and night of Nala, and of none but him.

As Indra, the god of heaven and earth, sat on his throne within his palace, he wondered because no young hero slain in battle came to be his guest, and he asked his messenger what had become of the warrior-kings of the world.

"O king of heaven," answered the messenger, "they do not appear before thee because they hurry to the swayamvara of Damayanti, the loveliest woman of all the world."

The gods who stood by exclaimed: "We also will go." And in an instant they were rushing through the air in their chariots to join the rajahs who crowded to the court of Bhima in the hope of gaining Damayanti.

As they went they saw Nala, and they stayed their course to look on him with wonder, for he seemed like the god of love himself. Then, sweeping down from the sky, they hailed him and asked him to bear their message for them.

Nala said, "I will do it." Then he asked them who they were, and what they would have him do.

"We are the guardians of the world—Indra, king of heaven; Agni, god of fire; Varuna, god of the waters; Yama, ruler of the dead. Tell Damayanti that we have come to woo her, and say, 'Choose for thy husband one of the gods.'"

Then Nala was very wretched. He begged the gods to free him from his promise, for he, loving Damayanti himself, could

not woo her for another. But they would not listen to his prayer, and urged him to go at once to the palace of Bhima.

"It is strongly guarded," said Nala. "I cannot enter there."

"Thou shalt enter," said Indra.

Instantly Nala found himself in a room of the palace, before Damayanti and her maidens. Her radiance was brighter and fairer than that of the moon, and the longer he looked at her the more deeply Nala loved her, but he did not dare to think of his love.

"Who art thou that hast come like a god to take all my heart?" said she. "And how didst thou enter this palace, where every door is guarded by orders of the king?"

"I am Nala," he replied. "I come as the messenger of the gods of heaven and of fire, of the waters and of the dead. And the message I bear is, 'Choose for thy husband one of the gods.'"

Damayanti bowed down, doing reverence to the gods, but she smiled upon Nala, saying, "I am thine, and all that I have is thine. The message of the golden-winged swan is like fire in my heart. Do not forsake me, or I shall die."

"Wilt thou choose a man rather than a god?" cried Nala. "Remember that who angers them must die. Save me from this fate, most beautiful princess."

Damayanti trembled, and her eyes filled with tears. "I honour the gods," said she, "but I choose thee for my husband."

"I have pledged my word to plead for the gods," said Nala. "I cannot speak for myself, but if ever I may do so, I will come again, so remember me."

"I see a way," said Damayanti. "Come to my swayamvara with the gods. There I will choose thee, and it cannot be counted as thy fault; the blame will be mine."

When the day of the swayamvara came, Bhima called upon all the wooers of his daughter to assemble in the great hall of the palace. Decked with garlands and glittering jewels, they passed under the lofty archway into the hall of golden pillars, and seated themselves on their thrones, and awaited the decision of Damayanti.

As she entered they gazed at her, and so great was her beauty that they could not look away. She glanced eagerly about for Nala, and was in despair. For there were five rajahs who resembled Nala, and which was her beloved she could not tell, so exactly had the four gods who wished to win her assumed his likeness.

In her grief and dismay she clasped her hands and prayed to the gods. She told them that she had given her heart to Nala when she heard the message of the swan, and that she could not break the vow she had then made. She implored them to show themselves as gods, that she might know Nala, the king of men.

The gods were moved by her prayer, and they let her see by signs that they were not human. Four of the Nalas on which she gazed had eyes that never blinked; their feet did not touch the earth; their skins were dry; the flowers of their garlands were fresh as if they had just been plucked, not a particle of dust lay on them; and, as they sat there on their thrones, they cast no shadows.

But one moved his eyelids, and drops of sweat stood on his skin. Dust was settling on him, his garland was beginning to fade, and his shadow lay by him.

Damayanti shyly touched the hem of this one's garment and threw a garland of bright flowers round his neck.

"I name Nala for my lord," she said.

"I am thine," said Nala, "and as long as I live I will be thine only."

Then the gods gave Nala eight gifts, among which were power over fire and over water, and the art of preparing food in a most delicious way, and of making garlands that would never fade. With these gifts they bestowed their blessing on him, and departed from the palace.

Now as they returned to their dwelling they met Kali, the demon of evil, with his servant, another wicked spirit.

"Whither art thou going, Kali?" demanded Indra.

"To the swayamvara," said Kali. "My heart is fixed on Damayanti, and she shall be my bride."

"That is all ended," said Indra. "The beautiful Damayanti has chosen Nala to be her husband."

Then Kali was very angry, and swore that he would have his revenge, and that Nala should lose his kingdom and his bride. He commanded his servant to follow him, and together they went to the palace of Nala, waiting for the opportunity to do him harm.

II

For twelve years Nala and Damayanti lived in great happiness. Two beautiful children were born to them, and all the blessings of life seemed to be theirs. But Kali haunted the palace, watching and waiting.

It happened that one day Nala did not purify himself completely before going to prayer. He sipped holy water, but did not bathe his feet. At once Kali entered into him, and took possession of his soul.

Then the demon prompted Pushkara, the rajah's brother, to challenge him to a game of hazard, and, when Pushkara did so, he commanded the evil spirit who served him to creep into the dice.

The two began to play. The great Nala staked his wealth, and lost the throw. He staked his treasures of gold and silver, his chariots and horses, and lost them all. He staked his rich garments, and still he lost.

Day after day the brothers played; day after day Nala lost. His counsellors and subjects begged Damayanti to persuade him to cease playing, and she did her best, but he would not listen to her. "Nala liveth not," said the wise men, sorrowful and ashamed. "This is not he." And indeed it was not; for his soul was possessed by the demon Kali.

Then Damayanti called a faithful charioteer, and bade him take her children to her father's court, and told him that, after he had done her that service, he was free to do as he would. The charioteer carried out her wishes, and, sorrowing greatly, went to the city where the renowned Rituparna was rajah, and became his servant.

Nala played on and on until he had lost all his kingdom.

"You have nothing left save Damayanti," said his brother. "Come, let us throw for her."

Then Nala seemed to know what he had done. He looked at Pushkara in anguish, and rose and left the dice, and went forth alone, clad in but one garment. Damayanti followed him. As soon as he was at the city gates Pushkara, who was now rajah, proclaimed that whoever gave him food or drink or shelter should be put to death. So no one dared help him, and he wandered away from the city, deserted by all save Damayanti, who still followed him.

They drank water and ate wild fruit and roots from the earth, but these could not still the pangs of hunger. After some days Nala saw on the ground a flock of golden birds, and resolved to capture one or two of them for food.

He stripped himself of his garment and, stealing softly forward, flung it over them. At once they flew up and away, carrying it with them. "Senseless king!" they cried. "We are the dice. We came here to take away thy one remaining garment—we could not let thee go with that."

Then the miserable Nala implored Damayanti to leave him and return to her father's kingdom. But she would not listen to his words. She was determined to stay with him in his misfortune and give him what comfort she could.

So they wandered on through the forest together, and that night they found a rough shelter put up for travellers, and lay on the bare earthen floor to sleep. As Damayanti slept, Kali urged Nala to abandon her. He cut her garment in two, and clad himself in one part of it. For a long time he could not bring himself to obey the evil promptings of the demon; like a swing, he went from the place and came back into it, but at last, though with bitter tears and remorse and shame, he left her there alone.

Great was her grief when she awakened and found that her beloved Nala had gone. She sought him through the dark and fearful forest, wandering alone through thickets of bamboo and cane, through groves of mango and date trees, past mountains and rivers and lakes. She saw fierce and terrible beings, snakes and goblins and demons, but she did not consider the difficulties of her way and the dangers that threatened her: her one thought was for Nala; her one desire to see him again and hear his voice.

At last, at the clear, cool ford of a beautiful river, she came upon a caravan of merchants, with camels and elephants. They stared in amazement at the lovely queen of Nala, wild and grief-stricken in appearance, clad in but half a garment, pale and lean and stained with dust. Some feared her, some laughed at her, some hated her; but others pitied her, seeing her beauty and her sorrow, and she went with them on their journey.

At night they pitched their tents on the green shore of a lovely lake, fragrant with lotus flowers. But, as they slept, a herd of wild elephants came to drink at a stream close by, and, seeing the tame ones, charged down upon them. Trees and tents were flung down by the mad stampede of the savage beasts, and, in terror, the travellers fled in every direction for safety. Many were crushed and wounded, but Damayanti escaped without hurt. In the forest she came upon a few men who had taken refuge there, and heard their talk. Who was the wild-eyed woman who had joined them? Surely she was a witch, and it was through her evil power that disaster had come upon them. If only they could find her they would stone her and beat her to death.

In terror she fled into the woods and wandered on alone,

until she met with some holy Brahmans who had escaped from the disaster by the lake, and they took pity on her and let her travel with them to the city of the Chedis. As she passed through the streets the people stared at her, and the children danced round her, thinking she was a maniac, with her tangled hair and her body wasted with hunger and soiled with dust. But, as she passed the royal palace, the queen happened to look down from a window and see her. She commanded her servants to bring her in, for, she said, "though she is afflicted with grief and suffering, her eyes are beautiful as those of the queen of heaven herself."

So Damayanti rested in her place of refuge, and, in time, she returned to the court of Bhima her father, and found her children safe and well.

III

Meanwhile Nala went farther into the depths of the forest, until he came upon a great blazing fire, and a voice cried from the midst of the fire, "Nala, come hither!"

Nala was not afraid, because the god Agni had given him power over flames. He leapt into the midst of the fire, and there, coiled up and immovable, he saw the king of the serpents.

"I deceived a sage," said he, "and he cursed me, and set me in this ring of flames, and decreed that here I should remain motionless until Nala set me free. Oh, most noble Nala, carry me out, and I will be thy friend. Take me up—I will be light in thy hands."

No sooner had he spoken thus than he dwindled to the size of a man's thumb, and Nala lifted him up and carried him from the fire.

"Now walk on and count thy steps aloud," said the serpent.

Nala counted ten steps,* and instantly the serpent bit him, and he became a tiny crooked dwarf with short arms.

"My poison will torment the evil spirit who possesses thee," said the serpent king. "Go to the rajah Rituparna, who is skilled in throwing dice, and take service with him as a charioteer. Here is a magic robe. When thou wouldst appear as thyself, think of me and put it on. Do not be sorrowful, for all shall be well with thee."

So Nala went to the court of Rituparna, and told him that he was more skilled than any man in the world in the

* The Sanskrit word for "ten" resembles that meaning "bite"! So the serpent king does not bite Nala till told to do so.

art of taming and driving horses, and Rituparna, who had always desired to be driven fast, made him his charioteer and superintendent of his stables. Every evening, when his work was over, he would sing a sad little song, wondering what had become of the lady who had been so brave and loyal, and whom he had so heartlessly deserted in the forest.

In the course of time one of the Brahmans sent by Bhima to search for the lost Nala came to the court of Rituparna to inquire after him. Rituparna could give him no news, but the deformed charioteer spoke sadly to him and said, "The noble woman is steadfast even in wretchedness, and she does not show anger with her lord, who has lost his kingdom and his happiness, even though he deserts her." The Brahman was struck with these words, and returned to Bhima's court and told them to Damayanti, who guessed that they were spoken by her husband.

She sent a messenger to Rituparna to tell him, as if by chance, that again she was to hold her swayamvara, for no one knew if Nala were alive or dead, and she was to choose a new lord. But the time was short—the swayamvara was to be held on the next day.

At once Rituparna sent for his charioteer, and told him to drive fast to the city of Bhima, for the beautiful Damayanti was to hold her swayamvara there on the dawn of the next day. When Nala heard that news he felt as if his heart would burst with grief, but he said not a word. He chose four horses, and yoked them to the chariot, and drove with such speed that Rituparna was amazed.

They passed by a tall fruit tree, and the rajah said:

"Now, my skilful charioteer, you shall see wherein I excel. On the two branches of that tree are fifty million leaves and two thousand and ninety-five fruits."

"I will count and see," said Nala.

The rajah protested, for he was unwilling to delay the journey. But Nala had his way, and plucked the branch from the tree, and counted the fruits. There were two thousand and ninety-five.

"This is marvellous," said Nala.

"There is nothing about numbers I do not know," said the rajah. "I know the secret of the dice."

"Tell me the secret," begged Nala. "If you will do this, I will tell you the secret of my power over horses."

The rajah did as he desired. No sooner did Nala know the secret of the dice than the demon Kali, invisible except to

him, passed out of his body and into the fruit tree. But still he kept the shape of the deformed charioteer, and swiftly drove his royal master towards Bhima's city.

Bhima was surprised to see Rituparna, who, for his part, was surprised to find no preparations for a swayamvara. But both rajahs hid their astonishment, and Rituparna was treated as an honoured guest.

Now Damayanti had heard the sound of that chariot driven by Nala like the deep roar of the thunder in time of rain; and the peacocks on the terraces and the elephants in the stables heard it, and cried out as they cry out with joy when they hear the crash of the clouds and know that rain will come.

"Nala must be the driver of that chariot," she thought. And she summoned the deformed charioteer into her presence.

"Have you ever heard of a nobleman who could forsake his wife, though he had promised before the gods to be true to her?" said she in a trembling voice, while tears filled her eyes.

Nala gazed at his wife, whom he loved more dearly than anything in the world.

"A demon was in his soul," he said. "That demon has passed away. But have you heard of a noble lady who could forget her husband and choose another for herself, as thou wouldst now do?"

"That was a trick," said Damayanti. "I knew that only one man in the world could drive the distance thou hast come in a single day. I have always been faithful in love, and never have I thought evil of him I love. I call upon the wind to slay me if I speak falsely—the wind, and the sun, and the moon."

Then the voice of the wind sounded from the sky, and said, "O Nala, thy wife Damayanti speaks the truth." With it sounded the music of the gods, and flowers fell about the place.

Nala thought of the king of the serpents, and slipped the magic robe over his shoulders. The deformed charioteer vanished, and there in his place Damayanti saw her loved and long-lost Nala, and he took her to his heart, and they were filled with happiness, for they were together once more, never again to be parted from one another.

Rituparna was glad to hear that his charioteer was the great rajah Nala, and taught him more of the mysteries of dice, and Nala gave him his knowledge of horses—how to judge and tame and control them.

Then Nala went in a white chariot to his kingdom, still ruled by his brother Pushkara.

"We will play again, for I have gained vast wealth," said he. "Having won great stakes, thou canst not refuse to risk them once more. I will stake all I have, even my beloved Damayanti, even my life. And thou must stake thy kingdom."

Pushkara was delighted to play once more with Nala, so sure was he of winning. But now he was no match for his brother, who won at a single throw all he had lost.

So Nala and Damayanti came again to their kingdom. Nala dealt nobly with Pushkara, pardoning him freely, and giving him a house and lands, because he was his brother. All the people rejoiced in the return of their rajah, and honoured him as the gods honour Indra, their king.

CHINA

Pronunciation of Names in the Chinese Stories

Vowel sounds : *a* as *a* in father ; *ă* between the *i* in bit and the *u* in shut ; *u* like *oo* in too, except before *ng* ; *ĕ* like *u* in lurk ; *o* between vowel sound in awe and that in roll ; *i* in *ih*, *in*, *ing*, as in chick, thing ; *i* as single or final syllable, like *i* in machine.

Consonant sounds : *ch* as in chair ; before *ih* like *dj*.

THE DIVINE ARCHER

LONG ago the Emperor of China went to dwell on a lofty mountain, to learn, if he might, the secret of immortal life from the spirit who dwelt there. He was accompanied by a young man called Ch'ih-chiang Tzŭ-yŭ, who was his Director of Construction and Furnishing, and his valued friend.

The spirit of the mountain would not let this youth go, and, when the emperor returned to his palace, having learned what he could of what he wished to know, he returned alone. Ch'ih lived on the mountains, and his food was flowers. Gradually his body became light, and he was able to move very swiftly: he was more like a spirit than a creature of flesh and blood.

One day his master sent him to cut bamboos on the peak of a distant mountain. It was hard enough to climb up, but, when he had cut his bamboos, he found that it was impossible to climb down. The rocky descent was steep and sheer as a wall: he could obtain no foothold. For a little he was perplexed, then, grasping his bundle of bamboos, he flung himself forward into the air, and, light as he was, he drifted safely to the earth. That was the first time he proved the new power that had come to him.

Some years afterwards, when the Emperor Yao was ruler of China, he met a man carrying a bow and arrows, who told him that he could shoot with unfailing skill, and that he could fly on the wings of the wind.

"Shoot at that pine tree on the mountain," said the emperor.

Ch'ih took careful aim, and his arrow pierced the mark. He then flung himself into the air with the wind, and was carried to the tree, and took out his arrow and brought it back and showed it to the emperor, who was so much impressed that he made him one of his chief officials, and gave him a new name—Shên I, the Divine Archer.

Many were the marvels performed by the archer. When the spirit of the wind sent terrible storms that threatened ruin to the earth, he vanquished him and made him beg for mercy; when ten suns blazed forth in the sky and withered up the orchards and cornfields, he discovered that nine of these suns were birds which sat on the mountain-side breathing out fire, and shot them with nine arrows, which he afterwards found stuck in nine red stones, lying where the birds had been. When a great river rose in flood he shot an arrow into its rushing torrent, and it withdrew into its banks again. As it fled thus from him he saw in its midst the spirit of the waters galloping on a white horse, and by his side was his sister, Hêng O. The Divine Archer shot an arrow into his eye, and he fled as fast as he could. Then he shot an arrow through the hair of Hêng O, and she did not flee, but turned and thanked him for not wounding her. She was young and beautiful, and Shên I loved her, and, with the consent of the emperor, made her his wife.

A few months after their marriage the daughter of the goddess of the western air decided to go and visit her mother, who dwelt far away on the snowy heights of the mountains, in a palace set in an orchard of peach trees, near which was a fountain plashing in a bowl of precious stones. To travel to this palace the daughter mounted a dragon, and as it flew on its fiery way it left a long trail of light behind it. The emperor, seeing this, was anxious to know what it might mean, and consulted Shên I. At once the Divine Archer placed himself upon the track of light, and was borne through the air to the mountain where the goddess dwelt.

The mountain was guarded by a monster which, when it saw Shên I approaching, called up a flock of phœnixes and other strange birds, and bade them swoop down and expel the intruder. However, as soon as the archer shot an arrow, they flew away in confusion, and the goddess Chin Mu appeared at the entrance to the mountain and asked him who he was and why he had come to this place.

When she heard that he had wanted to discover the secret of the track of light, she received him kindly, so that he was

emboldened to ask her for one or two of the pills of immortality which he had heard she possessed.

"First build me a palace," said she. "I believe you are a great builder."

Then Shên I summoned all the mountain spirits to his aid, and built a wonderful palace on White Jade Tortoise Mountain. The walls were of jade, the roof was of glass, the steps were of agate. The goddess was delighted with the appearance of the palace, and she gave Shên I what he so much desired—a pill which would give eternal life and the power of flying through the air as easily as a bird.

"You must not swallow it at once," she told him. "You must wait for a whole year, and during that time you must prepare yourself with a course of exercise and diet, which I will now explain to you."

Shên I listened carefully to the instructions of the goddess, thanked her, and returned home with his precious pill. He hid it under a rafter of the house, thinking that it would be safe there until his period of preparation was at an end.

He had not been long at home when the emperor called upon him to free the people from the menace of a dangerous criminal called Chisel-tooth. He took his bow and arrows and went off to the cave where Chisel-tooth lived by himself, and shot an arrow which split his long tooth, and a second arrow which killed him. He took the tooth home with him as a sign of victory, but his joy in having triumphed over an evil enemy was short-lived, for, when he went to look for his pill of immortality, he found that it had gone.

Now while he was away his wife, Hêng O, had been astonished to see a shaft of white light streaming down from one of the rafters of the roof. She noticed, too, a strange and sweet fragrance in the atmosphere, so penetrating that it filled every room in the house. Determined to discover what this might mean, she got a ladder, mounted to the place from which the light and sweetness seemed to come, and found the pill of immortality. She carried it to her room, and, having examined it, swallowed it. At once she felt extraordinarily light, and longed to fly. She lifted her arms, and they seemed to have the power of wings. She was just on the point of making the discovery that she could fly as easily as if she were a bird, when Shên I entered and asked her what had become of his pill of immortality. In sudden fear Hêng O opened the window and flew out. Shên I instantly seized his bow and pursued her. It was night-time, but the moon was full, and he

could see her a long way in front of him, seeming about the size of a toad. Faster and faster he sped on her track, when suddenly a great gust of wind swept against him and carried him off in another direction. Hêng O flew on and on till she came to a great, shining, cold world, where nothing grew but cinnamon trees, and no living creature was to be seen. The cold air made her cough, and she coughed up the outer covering of the pill of immortality, which was transformed into a rabbit as white as the whitest jade.

Meanwhile Shên I was whirled along by the wind until he came to the palace of Tung Wang Kung, the husband of the goddess of the western air.

"I have brought you here," said the great god, "because, for having slain the nine false suns, you deserve to be made immortal. No matter though you have lost the pill of everlasting life, you shall be as a god, and you shall dwell in the palace of the sun. And you shall see your wife again. I will give you a talisman which will enable you to visit her in the palace of the moon, but she will not be able to visit you."

Then he gave him a red cake to eat, and a talisman to wear. Shên I thanked him, and prepared to set out for his new abode, the palace of the sun.

"Wait," said the god. "You must know when the sun rises, and, to be sure of this, you must have the golden cock which is shut up in a cage on Peach-Blossom Hill. At the time of dawn that bird gives a cry that makes the sky tremble. He is the father of the birds with red combs on the earth, and when they hear that cry they all crow in response. I will write you a charm which you must give to the attendant who guards the cage, and then he will give you the cock of heaven."

Shên I obtained the cock, and rode on its back to the palace of the sun. There he dwelt contentedly, until he felt a great longing to see his wife once more. Casting himself on a ray of sunlight, he flew to the glittering, frozen world of the moon, and passed among the cinnamon trees to where Hêng O wandered all alone.

When she saw him she was afraid, and turned to run away; but he took her hand and told her that he was not angry with her. Then he hewed down some cinnamon trees, and dug up and cut some precious stones, and built her a palace, which he called the Palace of Great Cold. Now the quarrel between the two was ended. Every month Shên I leaves his own palace to visit his wife, and the moon is at its brightest when they are together again.

THE BRIDGE OF MAGPIES

Now Shên, the god of the sun, had a beautiful daughter, who cared for none of the things in which most young girls take pleasure. All she wanted to do was to weave, and hour after hour, day after day, she sat at her loom, and neither threats nor coaxing would induce her to leave her constant task.

Near the palace of the sun ran the silver stream of heaven, that stream of stars sometimes called the Milky Way. A herdsman pastured his flocks on its banks, and he saw the beautiful girl weaving at the palace window, and desired to make her his wife.

"It would be a good thing to marry her to this neighbour of mine," said her father. "If she were his wife she would have many tasks and pleasures, and could not sit all day at her loom."

So the herdsman and the weaving princess were married, and she left her father's palace. No sooner was she married than she changed completely. She thought no more of her loom; she thought no more of any kind of work. All day she idled in the starry meadows; as once no one could persuade her to cease from toil, now no one could persuade her to cease from play.

"This is her husband's fault," said her father, grieved and angry. "He has taught her to be a careless, lazy woman, useless to every one. For their own good they shall be separated from one another."

So he commanded the herdsman to leave his wife and cross to the other side of the silver stream of stars. The poor husband was very sorrowful, but he dared not disobey the mightiest of all the gods.

"What am I to do without my dear wife?" said he. "Shall I never see her again?"

"You shall see her again," said the sun god, "but only once a year. That will be on the seventh night of the seventh month."

"But the stream of stars is broad and deep. How can I cross it?"

"I will make you a bridge," said the sun god.

Then he called all the magpies in the world to come together. And instantly there was a huge rush and whirring of wings, and thousands and thousands of magpies flew to that place, and, laying their backs close together, and stretching and interlacing their wings, made a bridge across the stream of stars. Now the herdsman knew that he must go, and he said good-bye to his wife, who wept bitterly to lose him, and then he set foot on the light, strong bridge and went over the stream as safely as if he had been walking in the fields. As soon as he had crossed, the magpies separated and flew away, north, south, east, west.

Now the weaver princess worked hard with her spindle and loom, and the herdsman tended his cattle. Both thought of nothing but the happiness of meeting one another again on the seventh day of the seventh month of the year.

At last the time drew near, and only one anxiety spoiled the happiness of the weaver princess. She was afraid that rain might fall. The silver stream was always full to the brim; if rain came it would instantly swell into a rushing torrent, which would sweep away the bridge of magpies. But her fears came to nothing. On the seventh night of the seventh month all the sky was clear and starlit; no rain had fallen, and none was likely to fall.

As she gazed eagerly over the stream she heard a rushing sound of thousands of wings, and she saw what might have been a dark moving cloud; but it was not a cloud of rain—it was a cloud of magpies, flying gladly and swiftly to the place where they must join together and make a bridge. In no time it was there, the bridge of feathered backs and interlacing wings. Quickly she ran across it, and there was the herdsman joyfully waiting to welcome her again.

Only too soon they must part once more, and sadly the

weaver princess went over the magpie bridge to work alone at her loom, and the herdsman stood by the stream watching her go. Every year the magpies come together to make the bridge for these star lovers *—but only once, on the seventh night of the seventh month, and only if the weather is fine.

* The constellations of the Herdsman and the Weaver Girl are those which we call Aquila and Vega.

THE WATER STEALERS

EAST of a poor little village in the Yen country was a cave where a dragon and his dragon wife had lived for hundreds of years. It was well known that they were there, but for a long time no one had seen them, and as they did no damage no one gave them a thought.

During the reign of the Emperor Hung Wu a change came to this little village by the dragon's cave. The emperor had many wives and children, and the empress, though she was first favourite and her son was heir, lived in constant fear lest one of the other princes should succeed to the throne. As they grew up, she worked and schemed to have them sent from court. The greatest danger, she felt, came from the fourth son, who was beloved by all, and she persuaded the emperor to send him as governor to the Yen country.

The young man was now styled Yen Wang, Prince of Yen. Before he set out on his journey a Taoist priest, who, like every one else at court, had a great affection for him, gave him a sealed packet, and told him to open it whenever he was in any difficulty. In it were instructions that would help him. As soon as he had perused these he must close the packet, and read no more till again he found himself in a dilemma, when again he might seek for help, and it would be given him.

Yen Wang journeyed to his new kingdom, and when he saw it he was filled with melancholy, for it was a desolate and

barren land, with no city where he might establish his rule. In his distress he opened his packet, and drew out a paper, which told him to collect money from his wealthy followers and the inhabitants of Yen who could best afford to give it, and to build a city. On the back of the paper was a plan of this city, drawn in the exactest detail, and the young prince was much impressed with its beauty and splendour. He closed the packet, and set about raising the money to carry out the plan.

In time the city of Pekin was built, and its fame spread far and wide. Merchants came to sell their wares there, and the people of Yen were at last prosperous and happy. The prince was delighted with the great work, and he called together the ten rich men who had given most generously of their wealth to help to build it, and presented each of them with a pair of dragon-embroidered cufis, and allowed them great privileges in the new city.

Meanwhile the dragon and his wife grumbled in their cave. While digging out the earth to lay the foundations of the great wall round the city, the workmen had broken into this cave, without knowing what they did, or guessing at the fearful consequences.

"We will move," said the dragon.

"We will not move," said the dragon's wife. "We have been here for thousands of years, and the Prince of Yen shall not shift us."

But the dragon thought it would be better to go. Then his wife agreed with him, and said that they would go, and take all the water of the city with them. They would gain the prince's permission to do this by a trick.

That night, when the prince slept, he dreamed that an old man and an old woman appeared before him, carrying water-baskets. They knelt down and begged that they might leave the country, and take their two baskets of water with them.

The prince, little thinking that this harmless old couple were two dragons in disguise, granted their request. Then the dragons, full of joy and triumph, filled their baskets with all the water there was in Pekin and went off, carrying it with them.

Great was the distress when it was found that all the wells and springs and rivers of the city had dried up. The prince, who, on waking, had thought nothing of his dream, now felt that it must have some significance in connection with the drought. In his perplexity he opened his packet, and drew

out another sheet of paper, and discovered that the dragons had gone off with the water, and that he must follow them and bring it back.

He put on his armour and took his spear and mounted his black horse and rode after the thieves. Nor did he slacken pace till he saw before him the old man and woman of his dream, with a cart on which were two baskets of water.

Without a word he rode up and thrust his spear into a basket. Instantly a great cascade of water leapt out and rushed in a mighty torrent over the country. The prince was obliged to ride off at full speed or he would have been drowned. He spurred his horse up a hill, and then drew rein and looked round. The hill was an island in a broad, deep lake of water, which rose higher and higher. The dragon and his wife were nowhere to be seen.

The prince did not know what to do. But all of a sudden a priest appeared at his side and recited a spell over the water. At once it began to go down, and returned, not to the dragons' baskets, but to the wells and springs and rivers from which it had been taken. The broken basket became a deep hole, and from it rose a fountain. Since Yen Wang rode after the disguised dragons and pierced this basket the city of Pekin has never been without water.

THE GOLDEN HAIRPIN

EVERY city has its own god, who cares for its inhabitants, living or dead. It is he who sends little demons to carry off the spirits of the dead, and he judges them according to their deeds in the world. He takes care of those who have no descendants to honour their memory with worship and sacrifice, and sees that they do no harm to people still living on the earth.

One of these city gods, the ruler of Yen Ch'êng, has no skin on his face, and this is how he came to lose it.

Long ago a boy of the city was left without father or mother, and his uncle and aunt gave him a home and brought him up. When he was thirteen his aunt lost a golden hairpin, and she suspected him of having stolen it. He declared that he was innocent, and at last, in despair because she would not believe him, he begged her to come with him to the temple of the city god, and there he would convince her by a sign from heaven.

So they went to the temple and stood before the image of the god, and the boy said, "If I have stolen the golden hairpin let my foot slip and let me fall to the ground as I go out of the door of your temple."

Then, confident that the god would let him prove his innocence, he went towards the temple door. But as he crossed the threshold he stumbled, twisting his ankle, and fell to the ground.

His aunt was quite convinced of his guilt, and no longer wished to give food and shelter to so ungrateful and dishonest a boy. He left her house and went out into the world to seek his fortune. Many hard experiences did he undergo, but he had courage and intelligence, and, after some years, he began to prosper. At last, while he was still quite a young man, he became a mandarin.

Rich and successful, and honoured by all who were acquainted with him, he returned to Yen Ch'êng to visit his uncle and aunt. They had forgiven him for the supposed theft, but he could not forget their suspicion of him, and still longed to prove his innocence.

He went to the temple and prayed that the god would reveal to him what had become of the golden hairpin. His prayer was answered. That night he had a dream, in which the god appeared to him and told him that he would find the pin under the floor of his aunt's house.

The next morning boards were taken up, and there was the golden hairpin. Then the women of the household remembered that they had been pasting together the layers of the soles of shoes, and that they had used the hairpin to smear on the paste, and had left it lying on the table. The smell of the paste must have attracted rats, and one of them had carried it to their nest below the floor, and there, licked clean, it had lain undiscovered for all those years.

The young mandarin went joyfully to the temple with thank-offerings, but, as he stood before the shrine and thought of how he had been made to appear a thief, he could not resist speaking a word or two of reproach to the god.

"You made me fall down, and so appear guilty," he said. "And now I sacrifice thank-offerings, and you accept what I bring. Are you not ashamed? *You have no face.*" *

As he spoke the last words the plaster cracked and crumbled from the face of the god in his shrine, and fell into dust and fragments at his feet. And ever since that god has had no face. People have tried to repair him and patch him up, but the plaster always falls off, and he will never again look as he did when he made the youth who appealed to him seem guilty of having stolen the golden hairpin.

* Cp. our expression, "I wonder you had the face to do it."

JAPAN

Pronunciation of Names in the Japanese Stories

There is scarcely any accent on one particular syllable—all are given practically the same value.

Vowel sounds: *a* as *a* in father; *i* as *i* in pin; *u* as *u* in full; *o* as *o* in alone.

Consonant sounds: *s* sharply sounded, as in mouse.

The jewel was transformed into a goddess (page 165)

THE SUN GODDESS

IZANAGI, god of the air, and Izanami, goddess of the clouds, met together on the floating bridge of heaven.

"There must be a kingdom beneath us," said he. "Let us discover where it lies."

He plunged his gleaming spear into the abyss of chaos below the bridge. As he drew it up, the drops on it clotted and came together and formed an island, on which he descended, and Izanami followed him. From it they made a high mountain peak, on whose summit one end of the floating bridge could rest, and around which the whole world could revolve.

Then they decided that they would wed one another and dwell together on the earth, but first they must hold a solemn wooing. So they walked round the mountain, Izanagi to the right, Izanami to the left.

When they came in sight of one another the goddess of the clouds cried out in ecstasy, "Oh, what a lovely youth!" And the god of the air cried out, "Oh, what a lovely maiden!" Then they met and clasped hands, and so their marriage ceremony was performed.

They began to plan out the earth where they were to live, but they did not get on very well with the work of creation. The island was a barren waste, and their first son was a miserable weakling. In despair they crossed the floating bridge and consulted the heavenly spirits who, ages before, had arisen from the tip of an immense bulrush growing in the midst of

chaos. These spirits knew all things, and their decree was fixed and eternal.

The spirits told the earth-makers that Izanagi should have been the first to speak after they had circled the mountain. So they repeated the ceremony, but this time Izanagi exclaimed, "Oh, what a lovely maiden!" and then Izanami said, "Oh, what a lovely youth!"

After that all went well. They made the kingdom of eight islands, the mighty kingdom of Japan, and from the foam of the waves dashing on its shores were formed the islands of the archipelago, and the kingdom of China, and all the rest of the world. Their children were of divine strength and will: they ruled the rivers and the ocean, the sun and the moon, the mountains and the flowers and the trees. The most beautiful was Ama-terasu, who dwelt in the blue plain of highest heaven, and from her palace there lighted the whole world. At night her brother, whose beauty was almost equal to hers, but of a gentler, dreamier kind, held sway over heaven and earth.

The only one of their children in whom Izanagi and Izanami took little pleasure was Susa-no-o. He loved darkness and gloom and melancholy; he would fall into miserable rages and weep, and, as his tears fell, grass and flowers withered, and men died. His jealousy of his lovely sister knew no bounds. He envied her radiant light; he saw that her rice-fields yielded full harvests, and her orchard trees were laden with fruit. In his anger and spite he would open the gates of the sluices so that the fields were flooded and the crops ruined, or he would stop up the channels cut for irrigation, or turn colts loose on the growing rice. Again and again he showed his wrath and spite in such ways, but Ama-terasu was gentle and patient with him, and forgave him a great deal.

One day, however, as she sat weaving with her maidens, a dead horse fell through the clouds at her feet. It had been flayed alive and thrown into her palace by the cruel and envious Susa-no-o.

Trembling violently, she pricked her finger with her shuttle, cast it down, and fled into a rocky cave and closed up the entrance. In her horror at the cruelty of her brother, she chose to remain there in solitude, and no one could persuade her to come out to her sky palace again.

Then the world grew dark and miserable, and the gods were afraid that all beauty would be destroyed for ever, unless they could lure the sun goddess from her cave.

They uprooted trees from the groves of heaven and planted them before the cave, and hung a jewelled necklace on the upper branches, and below it a mirror made of stars in the form of the disc of the sun. On the lower branches they laid a robe of white and blue. They built a palace, and the god of flowers made the gardens round it.

When all was ready they called on Ama-terasu and besought her to come forth, but she made no answer.

"Then let us begin the festival," cried Uzume, the goddess of mirth, and threw a scarf of club-moss round her shoulders, and blew her bamboo flute, and waved a spear on which tinkled many tiny bells.

Great fires were lighted round the cave, and the gods made merry. The cocks, roused by the glare of the flames, began to crow as if day had dawned. Wilder grew the revelry, and, as Uzume danced before them, the gods laughed until the sky shook. When Ama-terasu heard those great peals of laughter, she looked out of her cave.

"Why," she said, "I thought all was darkness. I see light. I thought every one was unhappy. Uzume dances, and the gods laugh."

"I dance, and the gods laugh with joy, because at last we have a goddess whose beauty equals thine," said Uzume. "Behold her!"

And she flung her arms towards the mirror in the tree, and Ama-terasu, gazing, saw looking from its depths a goddess whose beauty was indeed her own. Bewildered, she stepped from her cave, and instantly the gods drew cords of rice-straw across the entrance. They shouted with joy to have her with them, and, when she saw that she was still their goddess of the sun, and no other equalled her in radiance, she accepted their offerings, and never left them quite to themselves again.

AUTUMN AND SPRING

ONE day a farmer, while passing through his rice-fields, saw something red and gleaming in the earth. He picked it up, and found it was a jewel, such a jewel as he had never seen before. It had been the gift of a god to a beautiful earth-maiden whom he had wooed in this field many, many years before, but the farmer could not know this. He wondered at its colour and fire, and he had not had it long before he discovered that eyes seemed to look at him from its depths, and sometimes he would start awake in the night thinking he heard a voice, low and clear and sweet, calling him by his name.

The farmer used to take their midday meal to his labourers, and one morning when the sun was very hot, and he was too tired to carry the provisions himself, he loaded a cow with millet dumplings, rice, and beans, and drove her along to the fields where they worked. As he went he was stopped by Ama-boko, a rich and powerful prince, who fancied he intended to kill the cow. The farmer tried to make the prince listen to what he had to say: it was useless, and at last, afraid lest some terrible punishment should be inflicted on him, he drew forth the red jewel and gave it to Ama-boko.

When the prince saw the beauty of this present he said no more about the cow, and allowed the farmer to go on his way in peace. He hurried to his palace and took out the jewel and gazed into its deep, gleaming fire. Then a miracle hap-

pened. Before his ravished eyes the jewel was transformed into a goddess of incomparable loveliness. His one desire was that she should be his wife, and they were married before the moon waned.

The goddess thought only of how to please the prince: she prepared for him food and wine such as the gods delight in; no mortal knows the secret of their delicious flavour. At first the prince thought himself the most fortunate of men, but after a time he treated his wife contemptuously and cruelly. She was sad because of the change in him, then she was angry, and told him that, as he did not deserve her love, she would leave him and go back to her father. He gave no heed to this threat, thinking that she would never have the heart to fulfil it; but one day she disappeared and fled to Naniwa, where she was honoured and worshipped as Akaru-hime, goddess of light. The prince sought her sorrowing, but his grief was of no avail: she was lost to him for ever.

Among his children's children was a princess as lovely as the goddess who had sprung from the red jewel. Eighty wooers came to the palace to ask for her hand, but she cared for none of them. Then two young gods, brothers—the gods of Autumn and Spring—resolved to try their luck. The elder one, Autumn, went into her presence first, and she bade him depart, for she could not love him.

"It is useless," he said to his brother. "If she does not love me, she will have nothing to say to you."

"I will give you a cask of wine if I do not win her," said Spring. "If I succeed, the wine is your gift to me."

Autumn agreed to the wager. Spring went to their mother and asked her advice as to how he should charm the princess. She wove a robe for him to wear when he went wooing—a robe and sandals of the buds of lilac and white wistaria, and she made him a bow and arrows of the same flowers.

As Spring came before the princess all the buds of his robe unfolded, and such a sweetness came from the open flowers that all the palace was filled with it. The princess was enchanted, and gave him her hand.

When Autumn heard of how Spring had won the lovely lady he was very angry, and refused to give the cask of wine he had wagered, whereupon his mother punished him for breaking his word.

She took a bamboo cane, and filled it with stones and salt, and wrapped bamboo leaves round it, and made a fire and hung it in the smoke.

"As the leaves wither and shrivel, so shall you. As the salt waves ebb from the shore, so shall your life ebb away. As the stone sinks lower and lower, so shall your strength and beauty sink into the ground."

And now Spring is always gay and delightful as when he went wooing in his robe of lilac and wistaria; Autumn is withered and melancholy, as his life passes away from him, in fulfilment of his mother's curse.

NORTH AMERICA

Pronunciation of Names in the North American Tales

After each name is given that of the creature into which the person was frequently changed.

(*ā* like *a* in hate ; *ă* like *o* in not ; *aĭ* like *i* in bite ; *aŭ* like *ow* in now ; *ē* like *ai* in bait ; *ĕ* like *e* in bet ; *ī* like *ee* in beet ; *ĭ* like *i* in bit ; *ō* like *o* in note ; *ŏ* like *o* in not ; *ū* like *oo* in boot ; *ŭ* like *u* in bull ; *ḥ* like *ch* in loch, or German *ch*.)

Hau, red fox.
Hawt, eel.
Hus, turkey buzzard.
Ka'hit, wind.
Katkatchi'la, swift.
Kla'bus, mole.
Lut'chi, humming bird.
Loi'mis, water.
O'lelbis.
Olelpan'ti.
Pohi'la.
Sas, the sun.
Sas'kewil.
Se'dit, coyote.
Sot'chet, beaver.
Su'tunut, black eagle.
Yo'not, buckeye bush.
Tulchuher'ris.
Winishu'yat.

THE HOUSE OF FLOWERS AND THE GREAT FIRE*

ONCE there was another world, before the one we know. But before that world—before any one lived on earth at all—Olelbis lived in the kingdom of Olelpanti, above the sky. He lived there with two old, old women, whom he called his two grandmothers.

Now Olelbis made up his mind to build himself a house, and he got the two grandmothers to help him. They dug the foundations, and, at their bidding, he went far away to the south and pulled up a white oak tree for the central pillar, and brought it back on his shoulder. Then they told him to go south-east for two more white oaks, north for a black oak, east for a live oak, and west for an oak different from the others.

He brought all these trees, and built the house in this way. He set up the great white oak from the south as the central pillar, then he set the black oak on the north side, sloping so that its branches were on the south side of the house. The western oak he planted on the west, and its branches hung out to the east, and the others he arranged in a similar way, from south to north and from east to west.

* This legend and the two that follow it belong to the Wintu Indians.

"Now, grandson, how will you bind the top?" said one of the grandmothers.

"I don't know," said Olelbis.

The old woman stretched out her hand to the south, and on it came a plant with beautiful blossoms. She took this plant, roots, stem, and all, and made a long strip of binding, the roots and stem woven together on the inside, and the blossoms on the outside.

"Put this round the top of the house and bind the trees with it," she said.

He did this, and a strong good binding it was, and very fragrant. Then the two grandmothers made four mats, one to hang at each side of the house. First they wove a mat of red flowers for the north, then one of the same plant that they had used for the binding for the east, then one of white flowers for the south, then one of blue and white flowers for the west. All the flowers were turned towards the outside of the house. The grandmothers then gave Olelbis every kind of blossom that is now in the world to make a bank round the house, below the hanging mats.

"Now I want benches by the door," said Olelbis.

"We will get rolls of acorn bread," said the two old grandmothers.

So they got great round rolls of acorn bread, like trunks of trees, and put them one on either side of the door, for seats.

"Now, grow, my house," said Olelbis. "Be high and wide; be large enough for all the people who will come to you."

All night the house grew and grew, and at dawn it grew no more. There it stood in the early light—a mountain of blossoms and oak tree branches: all the colours of the world were on it, and all the sweet odours of th world came from its flowery walls. The white oak tree in the middle towered from the top, and a few of its acorns had fallen on every side. It was made to last for ever, and nothing like it will ever be built again.

Olelbis was delighted with his house. Now his work was finished he looked down on the world, as he often used to do. Nothing of it was to be seen: it was covered with flames and smoke.

This is what had happened.

Down in the south-west was a hunter called Katkatchila, who killed deer and other animals very easily. No one knew what weapon he used, and he would tell no one his secret.

A certain tribe resolved to discover it, so they sent a messenger to the house where he lived with his sister Yonot, and told him that they meant to hold a great dance and a great hunt, and asked him if he would join them.

Katkatchila was glad to go. They danced all night, and in the morning, after they had eaten, they set out to hunt. The tribe had plotted among themselves to watch until Katkatchila killed a deer, and then to run up and take out the thing with which he killed it.

The first day this plan was tried without any success. Katkatchila killed a great many deer, but he always ran up to his prey and secured his weapon before any one else could come near it. On the second day Hau (Red Fox), said he would see what he could do.

The hunters saw ten deer on the mountain. As Katkatchila stood back, taking aim, Hau stood ready to run. The minute Katkatchila shot he ran with all his might, reached the deer first, took out the weapon—a flint—and hid it in his ear.

At once Katkatchila was at his side.

"You have taken my flint!" he cried. "Give it back."

"I have not taken it," said Hau. "I have nothing of yours."

"You have. I saw you take it."

"I took nothing. I only put my hand on the deer's head."

"I saw you take it."

"You did not. I haven't it."

All day the argument went on. At last, when the sun had nearly set, Katkatchila said:

"I saw you take my flint. It would be better for you to give it back—better for you and for your people. You want to keep it—well, keep it. You will see what will happen."

With that he turned on his heel and went home. Hau took the flint out of his ear and held it on his palm, and all his tribe crowded round to look at it. They were surprised to see what a small thing it was. Hau told them how angry Katkatchila had been to lose it, and how he had gone away.

"It was a mistake to steal it," said one wise man. "Katkatchila is very strong and quick. He will make us suffer for this. Something dreadful will happen. You'll see."

And it did. Katkatchila went home and told his sister and his sister's husband, and his sister's husband's brother, of how the flint had been stolen.

Now Yonot had one child, called Pohila, the fire baby.

She never went out of the house herself, and she never let any one carry the fire baby out.

Her husband and his brother swept a smooth space in front of the house. They collected a great pile of pine-wood, as full of pitch as they could find it. Then Katkatchila persuaded his sister to bring out the fire baby and put him on the smooth space they had swept before the door, saying how good it would be for him to be out there. As soon as she set the baby on the turf, they pushed the pitch-pine twigs and logs towards him. At once the wood caught fire, and Yonot's husband took a great blazing brand and rushed off to the south-west, and his brother took a great blazing brand and rushed off to the south-east. They held the points of their brands close to the earth, and set fire to everything as they ran. When they came to the places where the sky touches the earth they ran round northward, and they met just halfway between the east and the west. Then they struck their torches together, and threw them to the ground. By this time the whole earth was blazing. Only a few persons had escaped, and they crept up outside the sky where it touches the earth.

Olelbis wanted to put out this great fire, and his two grandmothers told him to seek the help of the old man Kahit. Far, far north, outside the sky, lived this old man all alone. He sat with his head between his hands and his face to the north, and he never looked up.

Olelbis called two of his subjects, Lutchi (Humming Bird) and Sutunut (Eagle), and he told Lutchi to prop the sky up well above the burning earth with a sky-pole, and he told Sutunut to put two of his wing feathers on the cheeks of old Kahit, and bid him to come south with Mem Loimis, who lived not far from him, in the ground.

Lutchi reached the sky on the north, raised it and propped it with his sky-pole, and Sutunut gave his message to Kahit, who slowly raised his head from between his hands and turned towards the south. Then Sutunut put the feathers on his cheeks, and the son of Mem Loimis, who was called Sotchet, cried out and said:

"Go on, old Kahit. I want to see Olelbis. Drive on the great waters, and I will travel along them to see Olelbis."

"Unlock the great waters, and come with me on my journey to Olelbis," said Kahit to Mem Loimis.

Then Mem Loimis opened the door of her cave, and out rushed a huge flood, and she rode on the waves of it, and old Kahit drove it along before him. He looked like an enormous

bat, with wings spread to the east and to the west, and, as he flew, his two cheek feathers grew straight out, and became so long that they touched the sky on either side. He had a whistle in his mouth, and as he came rushing forward he blew it with all his might, and it made a terrible noise. When Olelbis saw them coming he made an oak paddle and hurled it to where Sotchet was. Sotchet caught the paddle, made a tail of it, and went plashing along through the water, like the beaver he afterwards became.

On swept the wind and the flood, and when they came to the hole in the sky, made by Lutchi when he fixed up his sky-prop, the water rushed through like a crowd of rivers and fell on the flaming earth. Not all of it could escape through the hole, and great waves rolled on towards Olelpanti.

Then Olelbis called out to old Kahit :

"We have wind and water enough. Can you not stop them?" he said.

Then Kahit flew round to the east and made Mem Loimis turn back the great flood. She drove it before her back again to the cave in the ground, and Kahit turned and went north to where he had been at first, and sat down again in silence, with his head between his hands.

Now Olelbis was pleased to see that the fire was put out, but he was sad because there was nothing alive in the world, and all the earth and flowers and trees and grass had been burned or washed away. He did not know where to find earth, and his grandmothers did not know.

Among the people who had hidden on the other side of the sky were Klabus and Yilahl.* They came to see Olelbis, and Yilahl said that there was a patch of earth near his hiding-place, where the sky touched the world to the west. Olelbis asked him and his friend Klabus to go and fetch that earth for him. The old grandmothers gave them two round baskets, and off they went to the west. As soon as they had left him, Olelbis took a great sky-net and spread it out over the sky. Klabus dug up the earth and filled the baskets, and tipped them into the net, and it fell down on the rocky world like rain. Klabus fetched more and more. Yilahl showed him where it was, but he did not help him to dig or to carry it.

"Now Yilahl must help you," said Olelbis. "Together you must build up the world, and put it all in proper order."

Then the two set to work. Yilahl made the small hills

* *Klabus* means mole ; *Yilahl* means pouched rat.

and fixed the rolling country; Klabus threw up the great mountains and the mountain ranges. As soon as they had finished, a strange people began to travel along the ridges they had made. Olelbis questioned his grandmothers about these, and heard that they were the cloud people. Katkatchila and his little brother knew all about them, said the old women.

Olelbis asked Katkatchila who they were and whence they came, and heard of how the wind had driven steam and smoke to the south at the time of the great fire, and these had become people—the cloud people. They were red, or white, or black, and they were so wild and swift that it was difficult to catch them.

Then Olelbis helped Katkatchila and his little brother to make a trap, and they caught three clouds, one of each colour, and skinned them, and Olelbis tanned the skins. The red one he gave back to the brothers, and they hung it up every now and then, sometimes in the east and sometimes in the west. He gave the white and the black ones to his two grandmothers. When they hung the white skin outside their house, white clouds went drifting away from it; when they hung out the black one, black rain clouds gathered. From these two skins came rain for the people of the new world.

Olelbis decided that he would keep with him the best and noblest people who already lived in Olelpanti, and that he would send down the others to be beasts, birds, and other creatures on earth. Before he sent them down he gathered them together and told them that he would put something on their teeth or beaks or mouths to make them harmless to men. Now three of them—Wima and Klak and Dokos—would not let him do this. Wima and Klak said that they did not want to have their teeth touched: they were afraid they would not be able to eat if anything were put on them. Dokos said that he would have nothing on his, because he did not want to be harmless: he hated Wima and Klak, and would like to punish them for disobeying the will of Olelbis, and he hated every one and everything that was or would be in existence, and would like to kill them all.

Then Olelbis made Wima a grizzly bear and Klak a rattlesnake, and told them that they would bite people and kill them, and that people would take Dokos to kill them, for Dokos was to be flint, and he would be made into arrow-heads and spear-heads, and he would be shot or hurled into the bodies of men and beasts, and they would die. Now the world was all ready for the new people, and they were made while the brothers Hus were building their bridge.

THE BRIDGE TO OLELPANTI

When Olelbis planned to send all the people and animals to live on earth he wanted to make sure that they would be safe and happy. He summoned to his flowery house two strong brothers, called the brothers Hus,* and said to them :

" I have a great work for you to do. Go down to the place where the first tree is. There a people will come up out of the earth, and they will come soon. Just above that place you two must make a stone bridge from the earth up here to Olelpanti. You will find lots of stones there ; pile them up firmly, and make the road over the bridge into steps, one above the other. Half across the bridge build a place where travellers may spend the night, and put a tank of good clear water there. When you have finished this road from the earth to Olelpanti, people will be living on the earth. They will eat and sleep and enjoy themselves, and at last they will grow old, and when they are old they will cross the bridge to Olelpanti. At this end I shall make two springs, one where they may bathe and one where they may drink. When the old people rest at the half-way house and drink the water there, they will feel better ; but when they bathe and drink of the springs of Olelpanti, they will be young and strong and beautiful once more. Then they will go back to the earth

* *Hus* means turkey-buzzard. The brothers could become birds by wishing to do so.

and live happily there till they are old again, when again they will cross the bridge and bathe and drink and become young. No one will ever die; no babies will be born. Now there are small trees on earth; when they grow tall they will have branches only at the very top, and these branches will be laden with acorns—acorns without cups and husks, all ready for eating. No one need climb the trees to gather them; they will fall to the ground as soon as they are ripe. Go now, and begin this great road over the bridge to Olelpanti."

The two brothers Hus went down to the earth, to the place where the first tree grew. They stopped and looked around and saw the big stones lying ready.

"I will bring the stones to you, my brother," said the elder Hus. "You pile them up and make the steps and the walls."

They set to work. On the first day the bridge to Olelpanti was as high as a big house; on the second it was as high as a tall tree. On the fifth day you could hardly see the top; on the sixth day it was touching the clouds.

About the middle of the sixth day the brothers noticed something moving from the south-west. When it came near they saw that it was none other than old Sedit, whom they had known well in Olelpanti.

Very fine he looked. He wore a coat of coyote skin, an otter-skin headband, buckskin leggings ornamented with shells, and a shirt also sewn with shells, the pointed ends outwards. He carried on his back a quiver made of otter-skin.

He stood and gazed at the two brothers Hus for some time, and then he said:

"Stop work, my grandsons. Come and sit here with me, and we will talk. When an uncle or a grandfather comes along people should always stop work and have a talk with him."

The two brothers took no notice of this; they went on working at their bridge. Sedit looked at them for a while, and then again began to plead with them.

"Come and talk to me, grandsons. Tell me what you are doing. I want to hear about it. You may think that I don't know anything, but maybe I can tell you something *you* don't know. If you don't come I will spoil your work; I will knock down all you have built up."

When the two brothers Hus heard this they came climbing down their bridge and asked Sedit where he had come from, and how he had come.

On the fifth day you could hardly see the top (page 178)

"I came from a place very far away," said Sedit. "I heard that you were making a bridge and a road across it, and I thought I would come and see your work, and have a talk with you."

"We are not building this bridge for ourselves," said the brothers. "Olelbis told us to make it."

"What!" cried Sedit. "Are you working for Olelbis? Did he send you down here to build this bridge? Do you believe what Olelbis tells you? I don't believe in Olelbis. I don't care what he says."

"Don't talk like that, grandfather," said the elder Hus. "Sit down and listen to me, and I will tell you why this bridge is to be made. I have told you nothing yet."

"I shall be very glad to hear," said Sedit. So he sat down, and the elder Hus brother told him about how old people were to become young and strong again, and how no one was to die.

"Huh!" sneered Sedit. "Do you think that is a good thing? You listen to me, my grandsons. An old man like me generally has something wise to say. When you have built this fine bridge of yours, what will happen? An old man will go up it and drink the water, and come back young. An old woman will go up and drink the water, and come back young. There will be nothing else in the world to do—nothing to be glad or sorry about. Now listen to me, my grandsons, and I will tell you something much better than Olelbis has told you yet.

"If trees have branches right to the ground, and acorns have husks and shells on them, people will go off in parties to the acorn-gathering. The men will climb the trees, with long sticks in their hands, and beat the branches, and knock down the acorns, and when the women see them coming they will jump and say, 'Oh!' and then they will pick them up, laughing and pleased because there are so many. Then they will all go off home together, and put the piles of acorns on the ground, and sit down and husk them, and throw the husks at one another, and laugh and talk and feel happy. That is much better than finding them all ripe and ready.

"Then what will people eat if nothing is to die? They will have no fish, no venison. They will have nothing but acorns. I think they will soon be tired of those.

"The happy way is for the young man and the young woman to marry and live in a house together, and work for one another, and help one another. When they get up in the

morning he will go off and hunt and fish, and he will bring in what he catches, and she will cook it. It will be much nicer for them to have a baby than to go up the bridge and become young again themselves. When the neighbours see her nursing it they will say, 'There is a baby!' and they will go to see it, and say to her, 'What a nice baby you have!' That is better than anything Olelbis has told you.

"When the baby grows up, and another baby grows up, they will be man and woman, and they will get married and have children themselves, and so there will always be plenty of people in the world. But there will never be too many, for the old ones will die. And when a man dies all his relations will be sorry and mourn for him, and when people see one of them they will say, 'His father is dead,' or 'His brother is dead,' and they will talk about him and be sorry for him. I think that is better than never having any one sorry for you."

The two brothers sat quite still, listening.

"Well, my grandsons, what do you think? Haven't I told you what is right?"

The two brothers said nothing for a good long time. Then the elder one looked at Sedit, and said:

"Yes, I think it is right."

"But, grandfather," said the younger one, "although you want people to die, would *you* like to die? Would you like to be lying on the ground, and not get up any more? Would you like never again to carry a beautiful otter-skin quiver on your back, like that one you have there; never again to wear an otter-skin headband, like the one you wear now?"

The brothers did not wait to hear what Sedit had to say to that. They got up and pulled out some great stones from their bridge, and the whole thing toppled over and fell to the ground. Then they took their buzzard forms, and went flying up to Olelpanti.

"Come back, come back," shouted Sedit. "Come back, my grandsons. We must talk all this over again. Come back, come back."

But the brothers flew higher and higher, and at last they disappeared. Sedit stood looking around for a long time. At last he said:

"What am I to do now? I wish I had not said all that. I wish I had not said so much. I wish I had not said anything."

He searched about and found many wild sunflowers growing near that place. He gathered hundreds of sunflower leaves,

and, taking off all his fine clothes, he stuck these leaves all over his body, and said :

"Now I will go up to Olelpanti, up to the sun. I am not going to stay in this place where people die. I will fly up after the brothers Hus."

He made a long tail of the sunflower leaves, then he sprang up and was whirled round and round, up and up, by the wind. But the leaves began to get dry and brittle, and, one after the other, they broke off and fell. After a while there were not enough left to bear his weight, and he came down with a great crash to the ground, and was killed.

So Sedit was the first to suffer the fate he had brought upon the people who live on the earth.

TULCHUHERRIS AND OLD SAS THE SUN

LONG ago, far away in the west, lived an old woman. She spent most of her time digging roots, for roots were her food.

One day, as she thrust her stick deep in the ground, she heard a faint cry, like that of a little child. It seemed to come from the earth. She listened, and heard it again.

"Whatever this is, I must dig it up," she said to herself, and turned up the earth with her stick, and felt carefully about in it. At last up came a great clod of earth, and under it was a baby boy. The moment she saw him she heard a great crashing sound like that of thunder, far away in the east, where old Sas lived with his wife and daughters. When she lifted him up out of the hole she heard this sound once more.

"Good baby! Good baby!" said the old woman, and she took off her buckskin apron and wrapped him up in it, and carried him to her house. "I am an old woman," she said. "I will be your grandmother, and I will wash you and feed you and take care of you."

She washed all the earth away from him, and tended him carefully. She could not sleep at night, she was so anxious about him. He grew very quickly: five weeks after she had found him he could walk a few steps and say a few words. As soon as he could walk well, and play by himself, she said to him:

"Now, my grandson, remember this. When you are playing outside the house never go to the east, for that is where old Sas lives. Play in the north or the south or the west—but never play in the east."

One day, while he was playing by himself, the boy heard some one calling him. He looked about, but could see no one. He listened, and the voice came again, from above—from the sky.

"Your name is Tulchuherris," it said. "You are the greatest person in this place. You must do your best to conquer. You are Tulchuherris."

He knew what the message meant, but he said not a word to his grandmother. He grew from a little boy into a tall and strong young man, but still he said nothing to her of the voice, and still she told him that he must never go towards the east. But one day in early spring she called him to her and said:

"I will tell you about old Sas. All my people went to the east, to his great house, Saskewil, and all were killed there. That is why I am alone. My grandson, your brother, the best of my people, was killed there. He is the one I grieve for most."

"I am sorry that he was killed," said Tulchuherris. "Now I must see what I can do."

He found a piece of white wood, and made a small arrow, and smoothed it with his knife, and painted it red, blue, and black, and feathered it, and, next morning before dawn, he shot it towards the east. As soon as it left the bowstring it became a humming-bird, and flew swiftly through the air; before reaching the house where Sas lived it turned into an arrow again. It dropped east of the door, and stuck in the ground there, and old Sas, within his house, heard something like the crash of a great rock outside. When the sun was up he went out and looked around to discover what had caused the noise, but he could find nothing unusual but the little arrow. He tried to pull it out of the ground, but could not move it. His two daughters tried too, all to no purpose.

"There is something strange about this," said old Sas. "Soon we shall see something happen."

Meanwhile Tulchuherris got ready for his journey. He made himself leggings and a shirt of the branches of a thorn-bush, and shoes of green water-stone, and a weapon of a pointed bone. He caught a panther and a fox, and they followed him like dogs. His grandmother made a great to-do

when she saw that he intended to leave her, but she gave him something which was to be of great service to him. This was a Winishuyat—a little man no bigger than a thumb, who could give warning of any danger. Tulchuherris put the little man on the top of his head and covered him up with his hair, so that no one should know he was there.

As the two were about to set off the grandmother complained of having no wood. "I am too old and weak to go out and get it for myself," she said, "and my fire will soon go out."

Tulchuherris went to the forest and pulled up many of the biggest trees by the roots and bound them in a bundle. He brought it to the house, put it on the fire, said good-bye to his grandmother, and set off.

He had not gone far when he heard the old woman crying: "My grandson, come back. The fire is going out!"

He put down his quiver and bow near his two dogs, went back, and saw that the fire was dying. He went again to the forest, and brought two huge bundles of trees, and put them on the fire, and again set out on his journey. He had gone some little way when he heard the old woman crying after him again, saying that the fire was nearly out. Back he went, and saw that every tree was burnt to ashes.

"I don't know what to do," said he to himself. "I cannot find enough wood to keep that fire going, and I cannot leave my grandmother without any."

Then Winishuyat said, "Gather one handful of the wild sunflower roots that are growing everywhere, and put them on the fire. It will not go out again."

Tulchuherris did this, and went off to the east. Once or twice he stood still and listened, but he did not hear his grandmother call again.

At midday he came to a great rock, small at the top and very high. An old man stood at the top of this rock, and called to him in a friendly way.

"The path goes right over the top of this rock," he said. "Come up. There is an easy way down the other side."

Tulchuherris looked about, and saw that all was dark on either side of the rock, but the footway across it was in bright sunlight.

"I will come up," he called.

"Careful!" whispered Winishuyat. "He means to kill us. He was sent here by old Sas. Run up to that rock and kick it hard, and see what will happen."

Tulchuherris rushed up to the rock and gave it one great

kick with his shoe of green water-stone. It went toppling over into the dark place, and the old man went with it. Where it had been was a smooth road, with a ridge on either side. The dogs ran forward along it, and Tulchuherris shouted down in the dark to the old man :

" Now you shall be a little ground squirrel, and live under the rocks. You are not like me : I am strong, and you are a little ground squirrel."

Then he went on with his Winishuyat still sitting on his head, hidden by his hair. They came to a broad river, and there seemed to be no ford. An old man standing on the bank saw him, and said :

" I am the only one who can cross this river. I carry over all who come here. If you like I will take you on my shoulders and carry you across."

" Let him do it," whispered Winishuyat, " but be careful."

" Very well ; carry me across," said Tulchuherris.

The old man took him on his back. The dogs bounded from one bank to the other, and stood waiting. The old man waded slowly across. At first the water was not deep, but in the middle of the stream it was up to his breast ; then it reached his neck ; then it reached his eyes.

" Be careful ! " whispered the Winishuyat. " He is going to drown you."

Tulchuherris took out his sharp bone, stabbed the man with it, and leapt from his head to the bank.

" You shall not be a man any longer," he said, turning to look into the stream. " You shall be nothing but an eel, and people will call you ' hawt,' and eat you."

The travellers left the hawt wriggling in the water, and went on towards the east. Towards evening they came to a high ridge, reaching north and south as far as a man can see. In the middle of the ridge was an opening in which stood a great pine, and this pine was cleft so that any one could pass through it quite easily.

Tulchuherris heard some one hammering at the other side of the wall. His dogs sprang through the cleft, and an old man showed himself.

" Come through, my son. You cannot pass at any other place."

" I must pass here, then," said Tulchuherris, " but I am afraid."

" There is no danger," said the old man, while the dogs sniffed at him and growled.

"Go ahead," whispered Winishuyat, "but be quick. That is old Sas himself. He has killed many of our people here."

Tulchuherris grasped his bow and quiver in one hand, stood on one foot, turned a little sideways, took a flying leap, and went through the cleft in a flash, and landed far away in the field on the other side. Instantly the tree closed with a great crash, and became solid.

The old man looked at the tree and chuckled to himself.

"Well, my son, you are caught. You are nobody. I am Sas. You were weak. I am strong. You wore your grandmother's apron. You knew nothing. I know everything."

Tulchuherris came up behind him, and heard all that he said.

"To whom are you talking, and what are you saying?" he asked.

"Ha!" cried old Sas, turning quickly. "Oh, I was talking to myself. I was saying that I had done wrong. I am blind, I am old, I am half crazy. You see my house over there. Go in. My daughters are expecting you. They shall be your two wives. You shall be my son-in-law. Go in; I will follow you."

Tulchuherris went in, and the two daughters spread a mat for him, and told him to sit down between them. All the time he was talking with them long-legged, red-backed, venomous spiders crawled over him, but they could do him no harm on account of the thorny shirt he wore. They got stuck on the long thorns, and died.

When Tulchuherris lay down to sleep that night he kept Winishuyat hidden in his hair. At midnight he heard a voice whispering to him:

"Oh, my brother, wake. There are two obsidian knives hanging over your bed on a cord of maple bark, and the cord is just about to break. Turn over—turn over!"

Tulchuherris turned over in a flash. That instant the two knives fell, struck the ground just behind his back, and were broken to pieces.

Next morning old Sas said:

"Tulchuherris, you are my son-in-law; my two daughters are your two wives. Now there are some things they have wanted to play with for a long time, and they have begged me to get them; but I am old, old and blind, and I cannot do it. Not far from this house is a small tree, and in the tree is a nest of young woodpeckers. Your wives want these red-headed woodpeckers as pets, but I am too old to climb the

tree for them. You can get them. I will show you where the tree is."

"I will get them," said Tulchuherris.

Old Sas took him to the tree, which was very high, and had bark as smooth as ice. When he said he could not climb it, his father-in-law threw up a rope over a branch near the nest, and told him that he would hold it firm while he swarmed up and took the young woodpeckers.

No sooner was Tulchuherris on the branch than the old man pulled down the rope and went off chuckling, and saying:

"Now, Tulchuherris, you are nobody. You were dug out of the ground with a root-stick. You grew up in your grandmother's petticoat. You are not strong; you are not wise. I am Sas."

Tulchuherris looked at the nest, and saw the heads of rattlesnakes peeping out in all directions.

"Stretch out your pointed bone," said Winishuyat.

Tulchuherris did this, and the bone became long and thin, though still very strong, and he stuck it into the heads of the snakes and lifted them out of the nest, and flung them to the ground.

"Now stretch out your hand towards the west, where your grandmother is."

Tulchuherris stretched out his hand, and at once something settled on it with a whirr and a flutter, like a bird. It was a sky-strap, blue like the sky, narrow, and very strong. He fastened one end of it to the branch on which he sat, and slipped down on it, and strung the snakes on his bone, and carried them to Sas's house, and laid them at the door.

"I have the woodpeckers, if you wish to play with them," he said to the daughters. "If you don't care for them, give them to your father."

"Oh, my son-in-law, you have killed my darling children," cried old Sas, and buried the snakes in a grave outside his house, and wept over them. But by the next morning he had forgotten his grief.

"Come with me, my son-in-law, and I will show you what I used to do when I was young. I am too old now."

"He will kill you unless you kill him," whispered Winishuyat.

"Show me what you used to do," said Tulchuherris, and followed old Sas, the Winishuyat sitting unseen in his hair.

They came to a tall pine tree, leaning a little to one side, growing alone on a level plain.

Sas climbed up a little way, and told Tulchuherris to seize the top of the tree and pull it towards him and let it fly back. Tulchuherris did this. Old Sas kept his hold, and slipped down.

"Now, my son-in-law, you climb up. Climb higher. I used to climb right to the top when I was a young man like you."

"Very well," said Tulchuherris. "Don't let it go too hard."

He climbed up nearly to the top of the tree, and, as soon as Sas saw how high he was, he drew the pine nearly to the earth, and let it spring sharply into the sky. But Tulchuherris sprang off behind him just before he let go, and stood waiting.

"You are done for now, my son-in-law," chuckled Sas to himself.

"What are you saying, father-in-law?" said Tulchuherris.

Old Sas turned and saw him there unhurt. "Oh, my son-in-law, I was afraid I had jerked you off and hurt you. I was sorry."

"Try again," said Tulchuherris. "Then I will climb to the very top and beat you."

Sas climbed up, higher and higher. At last he said, "I can't climb any more. I am at the top. Don't give a big pull, my son-in-law."

Tulchuherris took hold of the tree with one hand, pulled it as far as it would bend, and then let it fly. The tree rushed towards the sky with a sound like a great storm, and then came a crash a hundred times louder than a peal of thunder. The whole earth and sky shook; all living creatures heard that awful sound. It was the splitting of Sas.

Tulchuherris stood beneath the tree, and he heard a voice saying:

"Oh, my son-in-law, I am split—I am dead. I thought I was the strongest power living, but I am not. Tulchuherris is the greatest power in the world."

Tulchuherris looked up, but he could see no one. He only heard a voice far up in the sky.

After a little it spoke again, and said:

"Will you give me a few of your things?"

"I will," said Tulchuherris. "What would you like?"

"I would like your fox-skin headband, and your arrow-straightener, and your fire-drill."

Tulchuherris threw up these things one by one, and Sas caught them.

Then another fainter voice said: "I wish you would give me your headband of white quartz." That was the smaller part of Sas.

Tulchuherris threw it up, and said:

"Now, father-in-law, you are split, you are two. The larger part of you will be Sas, the sun, the smaller part Chanahl, the white one, the moon. This division is what you have needed for a long time, but no one has had the strength to divide you. You, Chanahl, will grow old quickly and die, and come to life and be young again. You will always be like that in this world. And, Sas, you will travel west all the time—travel day after day without resting. You will see all things in the world as they live and die. Take this, too, from me."

He threw up to Sas a quiver made of porcupine skin.

"I will carry it always," said Sas.

Then Tulchuherris threw up two red berries, so that Sas might make red cheeks on his face, and told him to go to Olelbis and hear exactly how he must travel.

Olelbis told him that he must go west every day, and at night he must jump into the great water that lies far west; and in the morning he must start from the fire in the east, where he could warm himself before setting out on his journey. He must carry a staff, which, every morning, he must thrust into this eastern fire, until the end of it was one glowing coal. It would remain red-hot all day.

So old Sas started on his travels. He put on the fox-skin headband, and fastened the arrow-straightener above his forehead, and stuck the fire-drill upright in his hair behind. At sunrise his fox-skin headband showed before any one could see Sas himself. Day after day he made his journey across the sky, never stopping; he saw everybody in the world, but no one could keep him company—he was always alone.

HOW THE ROBIN GOT HIS RED BREAST *

ONCE the whole world was dark and cold, for there was no fire to light and warm it. But Wittabbah, the robin, hopping here and there and seeing all there is to be seen, found out where it was, and he went by himself to fetch it from the far-away place and bring it to the people of the world.

He found a glowing tuft of fire, and all day flew with it in his beak; but at night, when he went to sleep, he put it under his breast for fear that it might go out when he was not watching it. Day after day he carried it through the air in his beak; night after night he slept with his breast over it to keep it safe. By the time he reached home, and gave it to the people for whom he had fetched it, his breast was red with the scorching heat of the fire.

Before he gave it up he made the sun, and he put a little flame into the buckeye bush, and it stayed and smouldered there. Ever afterwards, if people wanted a fire, they had only to rub a stick of buckeye against a piece of dry wood and the hidden flame would flicker forth. No living creature gave man a better gift than the robin with his scorched red breast.

* This story belongs to the Mewuk tribe, and is told by C. Hart Merriam, in his *Dawn of the World*.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Pronunciation of Names in Central American Tales

Hun-Apu, *hoon-a'-poo.*
Hunbatz, *hoon'-batz.*
Hun-Came, *hoon-ca'-me.*
Hunchouen, *hoon-chow'-en.*
Hunhun-Apu, *hoon-hoon-a'-poo.*
Hurakan, *hoo'-ra-kan.*
Vukub-Came, *voo-koob'-Cä-me* (*ä* as *a* in far).
Xbalanque, *ex'-ba-lank'-e.*
Xibalba, *ex-i-bal'-ba.*

THE WOODEN MANNIKINS

ALL the universe lay in darkness; all was darkness, and the world and the light of the world were unknown.

Through this darkness swept Hurakan, the mighty god of the wind, the heart of heaven.

"Earth!" he cried, and out of the deep night the earth took form, and became water and land, and was lighted by sun and moon, as it is to-day.

Then the gods gathered together: the father and mother gods, Hurakan, and the serpent god covered with green feathers. They made animals and birds and fishes, and put them in their places on earth and in the sea and sky. Still there was something wanting—they could not tell what. To supply it, they made a race of mannikins, carved out of wood, and taught them how they should honour the gods and live well on earth.

But the mannikins forgot the wisdom they had heard. They forgot the gods who had made them; they lived in an evil way; and at last Hurakan and the others resolved to destroy them.

The earth grew dark, and floods of rain fell day and night. Four great birds swept down to destroy the unhappy mannikins: one plucked out their eyes, one snapped off their heads, one devoured their flesh, one broke up their bones and sinews and ground them to powder. They were in despair, and rushed here and there over the earth, seeking for comfort and a place of refuge.

But, far from giving them comfort, all sorts of beings, great and small, gathered together to abuse the mannikins to their faces. The very household utensils and the domestic animals crowded up to jeer at them—the millstones and pots and pans and dogs and hens.

"You have killed us and bitten us up," said the hens. "Now it is our turn. We will peck at you."

"You tormented us," said the millstones. "All day and all night we were squeaking and screeching and grinding for your sake. Now you shall feel our strength—we will grind your flesh and make meal of your bodies."

"You forgot to feed us properly," said the dogs. "Now we will bite you." And they gnawed the unhappy mannikins with their teeth.

"What pain and misery you gave us!" cried the pots and pans. "You smoked our tops and sides, you cooked us on the fire, you burned and hurt us as if we had no feelings. Now it is your turn. You shall be burnt and hurt now."

The wretched mannikins tried to hide, but not a place in the world would help them. They climbed to the tops of the houses; the houses fell down flat. They tried to climb trees; the trees hurled them from their branches. They crept towards the caverns; the caverns shut up before them.

Nearly all of them perished, but just a few managed to escape. It is said that the descendants of these are the small monkeys who live in the woods.

THE UNCONQUERABLE TWINS

HUNHUN-AHPU and Vukub-Hunapu, sons of the first god and goddess, were extraordinarily skilful in every pastime, especially in the great ball game * of Central America. So powerful and swift and daring were they that on one occasion they smote the ball into the underworld and followed it there. When the rulers of that region, Hun-Came and Vukub-Came, heard of this, they thought it might be possible to lure the brothers into their power and defeat and kill them. So they sent four messengers to the earth, in the form of owls. They flew to the brothers and said, "We challenge you to a game of ball with the princes of Xibalba, the underworld."

The ball champions could not resist such a challenge. They followed the owls down the steep, dark chasm that led to Xibalba, and they crossed a river of blood and came to the palace. There sat the princes in their splendour, side by side on their throne.

The brothers bowed and did honour to their royal hosts, only to hear a shout of mocking laughter from the Xibalbans. Then they saw that the figures they had greeted were not Hun-Came and Vukub-Came, but wooden images carved and painted in their exact likeness.

They stood glowering and silent, and the Xibalbans laughed no more, but bade them take the seat of honour. No sooner

* This resembles hockey in its general idea, though there were only two or three players a side.

had they done so than they sprang up in agony, for the seat was a red-hot stone. The Xibalbans shouted with joy as they saw the contortions of the unhappy guests, and then carried them off to the House of Gloom, where, after a little while, they were killed and buried.

But the princess of Xibalba had been drawn towards Hunhun-Ahpu, and had secretly become wedded to him. When her father discovered this he ordered the owl-messengers to slay her and bring him her heart; but she persuaded them to let her escape. She fled to the upper world, and went to the mother of Hunhun-Ahpu, who gave her shelter until her twin sons, Hun-Apu and Xbalanque, were born.

There were already two little boys in the house, the sons of Hunhun-Ahpu by his former wife, and they were called Hunbatz and Hunchouen. The grandmother became irritable and angry with the cries of the new babies, and at last she could no longer endure the trouble they gave her, and turned them both out of the house. But they throve in the open air, and grew big and strong. They became great hunters, and missed nothing at which they shot with their blowpipes.* Every one admired their skill and courage and strength, and this angered the children who were favoured by their grandmother. While they were with her, Hunbatz and Hunchouen were gentle and kind, and they delighted her with their singing and flute-playing; but they were cruel as could be to their step-brothers, and devised plan after plan to destroy what happiness they had won for themselves. At last Xbalanque and Hun-Apu could endure their spiteful tricks no longer. They had inherited the power of magic from their mother, the princess of Xibalba, and they resolved to test this on their enemies. Their experiment was successful—Hunbatz and Hunchouen were turned into apes.

The grandmother grieved bitterly when she heard what had happened, and begged the twins to let her see her favourites once more and to transform them to their right shape.

"We will do that," said the twins, "if you can look at them without laughing."

The old woman thought that would be easy enough. But when she saw the apes, and watched their queer grimaces and antics, and heard them chatter and scold as they played tricks on one another, she burst out laughing. Three times she tried to look at them gravely; three times she failed. And

* A weapon consisting of a long, straight tube, in which the hunter puts a small poisoned arrow, shot out by blowing with the mouth.

so she lost Hunbatz and Hunchouen, and the twins were free from their malice at last. Now they, in turn, became skilled musicians, and the tune they liked best was called, "The Monkey of Hun-Apu."

As they grew older, Hun-Apu and Xbalanque had to work for their grandmother, and, as they preferred hunting to digging and sowing, they again tried their powers of magic, and set a spell on their tools, so that these worked away by themselves on the maize field, leaving the twins free to go off with their blow-pipes into the forest. But during the night all the wild beasts met together, and replanted the weeds and bushes uprooted by the magic tools. When Hun-Apu and Xbalanque saw what had happened, they set a snare and lay in wait. The animals were too clever for them, however, and all except the rat escaped, though the rabbit and the deer lost their tails in doing so. The twins put the rat in a handkerchief, and when they saw what a small thing it was, they disdained to kill it, and set it free.

"Now I will tell you something in return for your kindness," said the rat. "I will tell you of the glorious deeds of your father and his brother; I will tell you what happened to them, and how you may escape should a like fate threaten you."

So he told them the story of Hunhun-Ahpu and Vukub-Hunapu, and of how the rulers of the underworld had tricked and slain them. The twins were grieved to hear of the death of their father, but they were greatly interested in the ball game he had played so well.

"There are sticks and balls in your grandmother's house," said the rat. "I will tell you exactly where to find them."

He did this, and the twins at once returned to the house and got out the sticks and a ball and tried the game. In a short time they became as skilful as their father had been. As they played where he had played, on an open piece of ground near the chasm leading to Xibalba, Hun-Came and Vukub-Came heard them, and resolved to lure them to their kingdom and kill them there.

The owl messengers brought a challenge, and the twins prepared to go to Xibalba. Before they left their grandmother, who by this time had grown attached to them and was sorry to part with them, they planted two canes in the middle of the house, and as these canes flourished or wilted she would know whether they were safe or in danger.

Hun-Apu took a hair from his leg and gave it to the deer, who went on before the twins to Xibalba, and stayed there

for a little. During his visit he contrived to prick all the Xibalbans with the hair, and so found out which were living and which were the painted wooden images which had deceived Hunhun-Ahpu and Vukub-Hunapu. He then ran back to the world and told the adventurers what he knew.

By his help the twins were ready for the Xibalbans. They did not greet the wooden figures on their arrival, and, remembering what the rat had told them, they did not sit on the red-hot stone. They passed through the dreadful House of Gloom, where their father and uncle had been slain, without showing a sign of fear. Then they played the ball game with Hun-Came and Vukub-Came, and they were victorious.

The rage of the princes knew no bounds. They commanded the twins to bring them four bouquets from the royal garden of Xibalba, and secretly warned the gardeners not to allow them to pick one flower. The twins did not attempt to do so. They called up a great army of ants, and these entered the gardens and brought the flowers.

Every ordeal of the dreadful kingdom was imposed upon the twins, and they came safely through all. They passed through the House of Lances, inhabited by demons armed with lances; through the House of Cold, where they warmed themselves with burning pine cones; through the House of Tigers and the House of Fire. In the House of Bats Hun-Apu was most terribly wounded, but by the help of his magic arts he recovered. The princes of Xibalba, mortified and angry, were obliged to confess that the twins were unconquerable.

"Unconquerable and immortal," said the twins. "We will prove this to you."

Then they called in two sorcerers, and, telling them what to do with their bones, they laid themselves on a funeral pile and died together. The sorcerers, as they had been commanded, ground their bones to powder, and flung it into the river, where it sank. Five days after, the twins reappeared as creatures half men and half fish; then they sank once more, and on the sixth day came up as ragged old men, who performed many strange marvels; on the next day they were themselves, Hun-Apu and Xbalanque. The princes asked them to show them more of their magical power, and this they did, burning down the palace and restoring it, killing a dog and bringing it back to life, cutting a man to pieces and making him whole and well again.

Seeing these wonders, the princes felt that they, too, would

like to undergo the adventure of dying and returning to life. They were slain, and the twins, leaving them lying dead, proclaimed themselves as gods from the world above, grandsons of the first of all the gods, and announced the doom of the Xibalbans.

"You shall not die," they said, "but you shall live to do all kinds of menial work; only the beasts of the forest shall be in subjection to you. You shall never again play the noble ball game. You shall be ugly as owls, and your faces shall be painted black and white, to show your treacherous, faithless natures."

Then the unconquerable twins brought the souls of their father and their uncle up from the darkness of Xibalba, and set them in the sky, where they became the sun and the moon. The old grandmother was delighted to see her grandsons once more, for she had long been torn between joy and anxiety, as the two canes they had planted in the house alternately flourished and withered, according to their fortunes in the other world.

POLYNESIA

THE MARVELLOUS ACTS OF MAUI

THERE was a time when the secret of fire was unknown to the men in this world. When the sun was clouded, and rain fell, they shivered with cold; when they were hungry, they were obliged to eat raw food.

Now there were four great gods—Ra, the sun god; Mauike, who ruled fire; Ru, supporter of the sky; and Buataranga, the wife of Ru, who was the guardian of the way from the lower world to this.

Ru and Buataranga had a son, called Maui, who, while he was very young, was given charge of the men who dwell on earth. So he left his home among the gods, and lived with mortals, and hunted and fished and sailed his canoe like any mortal man. He was small in stature, but he soon became distinguished for his feats of strength.

Sometimes his mother came up from the underworld to see her son, but she never ate with him and his companions. While they devoured bits of raw meat and fish, she went away by herself, carrying a basket she had brought with her from her own home. She did not allow Maui to see what was in this basket, and he resolved to find out for himself.

One day while she was on the earth she happened to fall asleep. At once Maui lifted the lid of the basket, and saw a tempting little meal of properly cooked food. He tasted it, and found it delicious in comparison with the fare to which

he had become accustomed during his sojourn in the world of men.

"This food is so good because it is made with fire," he said to himself. "Fire comes from the underworld, and there I will go and bring some back here, so that I may always have meals like this."

Buataranga would not have allowed her son to return with her to the underworld: his destiny was to be on the earth among men. He knew this, so he said not a word to her of his purpose, but, when she bade him farewell, followed her secretly, creeping among the bushes and reeds at the side of her path.

She stopped before a great black rock.

"Obey me, obey me," she said. "Like two dark clouds that part for the dawn, open, open, and let me pass on my way."

At once the black rock yawned asunder, and Buataranga went through its dark gateway into the other world. Maui ran away, repeating the magic words over and over to himself lest he should forget them.

Now, although he had lived so long on the earth, Maui still had certain powers greater than those of human beings. He could, on occasion, take the form of another creature. He must do this, he decided, to enter the underworld. So he went to Tane, the god of light, who had a flock of beautiful pigeons, among which was a red one called Fearless.

"Lend me one of your pigeons," he said.

Tane offered him one, and then another, but Maui rejected both, for his heart was set on the red one, Fearless, which Tane loved best, and would not willingly have lent—even for a short time and to his greatest friend. But Maui was so eager to have it, and promised so solemnly to bring it back unharmed, that at last Tane gave in. Off went the adventurer in triumph, carrying the red pigeon with him.

He went to the great black rock and stood before it, and said:

"Obey me, obey me. Like two dark clouds that part for the dawn, open, open, and let me pass on my way."

At once the rock opened, and Maui slipped into the form of Tane's red pigeon, and spread his wings and flew down the dark path into the underworld.

Two great demons stood by that path to prevent any creature from passing to the dim regions below the earth. They dashed towards the pigeon, stretching out their long

claws, intending to seize and devour it. It slipped away, but its tail feathers were left in their grasp. Maui was sorry for that, knowing how grieved Tane would be because his red pigeon was maimed. On he flew to his mother's house, and heard her beating cloth in a shed built by its wall. He alighted on the oven-house opposite the shed, and she looked in surprise at his colour, for none of the birds in the twilight of the underworld had such brilliant plumage.

"Do you not come from the light on earth?" she said.

The pigeon bowed its head.

Buataranga knew that Maui could take other shapes.

"Are you not my son?" she said.

The pigeon bowed again, and flew into the bread-fruit tree. A few minutes later Maui, in his own form, slipped down from the tree and saluted his mother, and told her how he had reached the underworld and wanted to learn the secret of fire.

"I do not know it," said his mother. "When I want to light the fire under my oven I ask your father Ru for a fire-stick, and he begs it from the fire god, Mauike."

"Where does he live?" demanded Maui.

"Over in the house built of banyan sticks. But be careful how you deal with him, for he has a terrible temper."

But Maui was not afraid of the temper of the fire god, or of anything else. He went straight to the banyan house, from which rose curls of smoke. There was a delicious smell—Mauike had a big fire under his oven, and was cooking himself a meal.

He stopped when he saw the stranger, and angrily asked what he wanted.

"A fire-stick, please," said Maui.

The god threw him one, and Maui took it and went off well pleased. Then it struck him that it would be useless to have a fire-stick that went out: he could not return to the underworld every time he wanted a fresh one. He carried the stick to a stream that flowed past the bread-fruit tree where the red pigeon waited, and dipped it in the water. At once the fire sizzled out, and he went back to the fire god.

"I will make him angry, then I will fight him, and force him to tell me the secret of fire," he said to himself.

So he asked for another fire-stick, and put it out as he had done the first, and for another, and was given embers from the fire under Mauike's oven, and threw them, too, into the stream. When he came back for the fourth time the rage of the god knew no bounds.

"Get out, or I will toss you up in the air and kill you," he said.

"There is nothing I should like better than to fight with you and prove who is the stronger," said Maui.

Mauike looked at him contemptuously, and went into his house and put on his war-girdle, and came out again to fight with the little fellow who had plagued him. But the little fellow had disappeared. Maui had puffed himself up to a huge size, so that he seemed a formidable antagonist.

However, Mauike was not daunted. He strode forward and gripped him in both hands and flung him up the height of a coco-nut tree. But Maui, by his magic, made himself so light that the fall did not hurt him in any way, and he lay comfortably on the ground, waiting for Mauike to come on again. The angry god seized him and tossed him up higher than the highest coco-nut tree that ever grew. Down came Maui quite unhurt, while his antagonist lay tired out, trying to regain his breath.

"Now we will see what I can do," he said. And he seized the unhappy Mauike and hurled him up in the air, and caught him as if he had been a ball, and hurled him again, and caught him again.

"This is but a beginning," he said. "The last toss will be the end of you."

The exhausted Mauike begged him to stop, and he would grant him whatever he liked to ask.

"Tell me the secret of fire," said Maui. "Tell me how to find it and make it for myself."

So Mauike led him within his house, where bundles of sticks and coco-nut fibre were piled up in corners. He took two banyan sticks and gave him one, and told him to grip it firmly, while he rubbed the other upon it and spoke a charm, bidding the banyan yield up its hidden fire. After a time a tiny cloud of smoke rose from the sticks, and in it was a thin flicker of flame. Mauike quickly put a handful of coco-nut fibre to this, laid the blazing fibre below a bundle of sticks, and, in no time, a great fire was kindled.

In triumph Maui went back to the bread-fruit tree and slipped into the form of the red pigeon, and flew back to earth, carrying the fire-sticks, one in each claw. This time he had no trouble with the demons, for Buataranga had told them they must do him no harm.

So fire was brought to the world, and men cooked their food, and warmed themselves when they were cold, and lighted their

houses when darkness came. But darkness often came too soon. Ra, the sun god, would move to and from the sky at his own pleasure, and no one could say how suddenly and unexpectedly he might disappear.

"I will make him follow a fixed path, and observe a fixed time," said Maui.

"Many have tried to do that, and all have failed," said Buataranga. "It would be wiser for you to leave Ra alone."

"I will make him obey me," said Maui.

He collected a great quantity of coco-nut fibre, and made six ropes, long and thick. Then he went to the entrance of the deep, dark cave from which Ra climbs from the underworld into the heavens, and laid a slip-noose there to catch him. The others were set at intervals along the path by which he was accustomed to travel. Maui hid by the cave, and lay in wait for the coming of the sun.

Up climbed Ra very early in the morning, and Maui threw his rope and drew it up and around him. But it slipped down his body, and caught him loosely round the feet, and he went on his way almost as swiftly as if he had been untrammelled. Maui flung the second noose, and it slipped again, catching him round the knees. The third confined his hips, the fourth his waist, the fifth his chest. Still he went on; but the sixth caught him round the neck, and then he was a prisoner. He fought hard for freedom, but Maui pulled the rope tighter, until he was almost choked, and tied him up to a point of rock.

Ra promised to do the will of his captor, if only he might be set at liberty. Maui told him that he must move more slowly on his way across the sky, and give the men and women on earth time to do their day's work without undue haste and exertion. Ra agreed to do this, and Maui let him go on his way, but he thought it better to make sure that he would keep his promise. So he left the ropes hanging on him, that he might know he would become captive again if he went back to his old bad ways. These ropes may still be seen hanging from Ra when he climbs into the sky in the morning, and when he goes down into the sea in the evening. They have proved helpful to him, for by them he is let down and raised up from the underworld, where he spends the hours of the night.

THE COCO-NUT TREE

In the island of Tamarua there lived a beautiful girl called Ina, who loved swimming. Near her home was a stream that widened out into a pool encircled by trees before it flowed away between dark rocks, and this pool was her favourite bathing-place. Every day she swam and played there alone, and every day she found more pleasure in its clear, calm water.

One afternoon, as she swam across the pool, she felt something touch her, and, looking down, she saw an enormous eel glide below her. Terrified, she hurried to the bank, and the eel slipped away to its hiding-place under the rocks of the stream. There were many eels in that dark water, she knew, but they seldom adventured into the clear pool she loved.

The next day, as she plunged in, she felt the same touch. She started away, gazing down in fear, and she saw the lithe eel thrust up through the water, and saw its eyes looking up at her. She was not afraid then—the creature seemed so gentle and tame, and unwilling to hurt her. She went on swimming, and it coiled down into the depths of the pool, and after a time returned to the stream among the rocks.

Day after day the same thing happened, and at last Ina became accustomed to the gentle touch of her strange playmate, and looked down to see its eyes watching her as if it recognized her and was content that she should be there. One day, as she lay by the pool resting after her bathe, the eel

swam into the shallow water by the bank, and suddenly its form changed, and there was no eel, but a young god.

"I am Tuna, god of the eels of the freshwater streams," he said. "I rule them and protect them. I have left my gloomy home in the dark water by the rocks to win your love, because you seem to me the loveliest of maidens. Do not be afraid of me. I am a god, and I love you."

Ina was not afraid, for Tuna was handsome and gentle, and she loved him. Every day when she came down to bathe he was there, and they swam in the pool and wandered in the forest together. As long as she was with him he appeared like a handsome youth, but as soon as she left him he took his other shape, and returned to the dark, still water, where he reigned as king of the eels.

Every day Ina loved Tuna more dearly, and every hour they spent together was happier than the last. But one afternoon he came slowly to meet her, and his face was grave and his eyes were sad.

"The time has come when we must part," he said.

"No, no. I will never part from you," cried Ina.

"It is the will of the gods. But, though I must go away from you, I will leave you a precious thing to remind you always of how much I loved you. You must promise to do as I command."

Weeping bitterly, Ina promised. Then he told her that on the next day there would be a great deluge of rain, and the stream where he lived would rise and flood the whole land. She would find that her house was surrounded with water. But she must not be afraid. In his eel form he would swim to the threshold of her door, and lay his head upon it. She must take an axe and strike his head from his body, and bury it, and watch to see what would happen.

Ina could not bear the thought of cutting off the head of the eel, but Tuna pleaded with her, and reminded her of her promise, and repeated that this thing was the will of the gods, and could not be avoided. Then he disappeared, and, through her tears, she saw the great eel glide away down the stream.

That night torrents of rain fell. The water rose quickly, and spread over the taro-patches outside Ina's hut, and reached the very door. It seemed as if the whole earth would become one great lake. But when Ina went to the door she saw the eel swim towards her. It laid its head on the threshold, and she knew that the time had come when she must keep her promise.

She struck off the head, and buried it in the one patch of land at the back of the hut that was still above water. Almost at once the rain ceased, and the flood abated. There was no fear now that Ina would be drowned. But she could not rejoice because of that: day and night she thought of the eel god, and mourned his fate.

As she was bidden to do, she watched the place where she had buried the head. For a little nothing happened. Then a young shoot appeared, and divided into two, and gradually these grew into strong young trees, with leaves unlike those of the other trees on the island. In time they bore blossoms, and then the petals fell and the fruit swelled and ripened. One of these trees was all red—red stem, flowers, and fruit; the other was green.

Every one came to gaze and wonder at the trees, and Ina watched and tended them, for they were the gift of which Tuna had spoken. When it was time to strip the husk from the fruit, it was proved that they were indeed his gift, for on each shell was marked the eyes and mouth of the eel she had so often watched in the pool.

So were the coco-nut palms, with their precious fruit, given to the earth.

She went on swimming, and it coiled down into the depths of the pool (page 206)

THE SECRET OF NET-MAKING

FOR some reason Kahukura had always longed to visit Rangiaowhia, far to the north of the village where his tribe dwelt. When he was old and wise enough to make the journey he set out alone, for none of his friends wished to accompany him, and he knew that his heart would never be at rest till he had seen the place of which he had thought for so long.

He came safely to Rangiaowhia. As he was walking along the road by the shore he saw that some fishers had been cleaning mackerel there, and had left the heads and tails and insides of the fish scattered on the sand. At first he thought that the people of the village had been working there. Then he wondered why none of the reeds and grasses on which they sat in the canoes were scattered about. Then he noticed that the footprints in the sand did not seem to have been made that morning, but, he thought, during the night. It struck him that fairies had been there, fishing and cleaning their fish.

Now, strangely enough, Kahukura was not dark, like most of his people, but white-skinned and golden-haired like the fairies themselves. And he was not afraid of the fairies: he wanted to see them and perhaps find out something from them which he could report to his friends when he returned home.

He went to the house in Rangiaowhia where he was staying, but not one word did he say of the signs that the fairy folk had been fishing on the shore.

At moonrise that night he went back to the place where he had seen the remains of the mackerel, and hid in the shadow of

a rock. Sure enough, there were the fairies. They ran up and down the shore, calling, "A net here! A net here!" Then they pushed off a canoe to fetch another in which the net had been put, and spread it out and dropped it into the water, singing:

"Drop the net at Rangiaowhia,
Drop the net at Rangiaowhia,
And haul it out at Mamaku."

They sang away all the time they worked. As they hauled the net to the shore, Kahukura managed to slip among them and lend a hand with the rope. Because he was fair they did not notice that he was a human being; in the light of the moon he might have been one of themselves.

As the net, with its load of fishes, was dragged nearer and nearer to the shore, the fairies laughed and sang, and shouted, "Into the sea, some of you, into the sea, lest the net should catch in the rugged rock." So some of them dashed away into the sea and saw that the net cleared the rugged rock, and the others hauled and hauled, Kahukura working away in the midst of them.

At the first faint light of dawn the fish lay shining on the beach, and the fairies ran about gathering them up. They did not divide them equally, but each one took what he wanted, and strung them together. All the time they kept crying, "Quick, quick, come here. Run, run, all of you; finish the work before sunrise."

Kahukura strung his fish with the rest. He was very anxious to delay the fairies with their work, so that at the last moment they should rush away helter-skelter and leave what he wanted on the shore. So he strung his fish on a short string, and as soon as he lifted them from the ground the slip-knot became undone with the weight of the fish, and off they fell on to the sand. Some of the fairies ran to help him string them up again, but again the slipknot gave, and off slid the fish. He repeated this trick at different places on the shore, and different groups of fairies helped him to load and knot his string. So he kept them back from their own work.

Then the light of dawn came clear, and Kahukura stood revealed as a man. As soon as the fairies saw him they fled in terror and confusion, leaving fish and canoes and net on the shore. That was what Kahukura had hoped would happen. The canoes, in the light of day, were mere stems of flax, but the net, made of rushes, was finely worked in a mesh. Now

Kahukura knew how to make a net: he had the pattern of the stitch from the fairies.

He returned from Rangiaowhia to his own village, and he taught his children the secret, and they taught others. That is how the Maori people learned in very early times the craft of making nets for fishing and hunting.

THE FAIRIES ON THE MOUNTAIN

ONE day Te Kanawa, a chieftain of Waikato, went hunting for kiwis on the mountain side. The hunting party were so much engrossed in their sport that they did not notice that the sun was sinking, and at nightfall they found themselves on the top of a mountain. It would have been impossible to make the descent safely in the dark, so they prepared to spend the night in that place.

They found a huge tree to serve as shelter. Its roots were thrust up out of the ground, and it was possible to sleep fairly comfortably between them. They chose their resting-places, and kindled a big fire beyond the tree, to give them light and protect them from the wild creatures that might molest them. Then they settled down to sleep.

But, as soon as the thick night fell on the mountains, there was a sound of hundreds of voices, deep and shrill, high and low, all blended together. It seemed as if a crowd of people were climbing up to the camping-place. Te Kanawa and his men rose from their beds among the big twisted roots, and peered into the darkness, but they could see no one.

"That noise must be the talk of the fairy people," said Te Kanawa.

His men were terribly afraid, and would have run away if they had known where to seek refuge. But to flee in the darkness would have been to hurl themselves to death down some unseen precipice, and there was nothing for it but to

hide among the roots once more and wait the coming of the fairies.

The voices became clearer and clearer as the fairies approached, and at last they stood by the fire, all white and gold, as different as could be from the dark-skinned, dark-haired Maoris, who crouched half-dead with fear in their hiding-places. As soon as they spied the human creatures they were filled with curiosity, though they, too, were a little afraid. Te Kanawa especially attracted them, for he was tall and strong and handsome, and well worth seeing.

They crept up to the roots and looked over at the huntsmen, and when the fire blazed up brightly they all scuttled away from the big tree and hid, and peeped round bushes and stumps, ready to steal out when the bright flames died down. The companions of Te Kanawa swooned with fear, only the chieftain kept his wits about him and watched the strange, white-skinned people, with their floating fair hair.

Back they came to look at him as the fire sank low; back they ran to their hiding-places when a flame darted up to life once more. They grew bolder and bolder, and sang in merry, teasing voices:

"Here you come climbing, come climbing, come climbing,
To visit Te Kanawa,
Handsome Te Kanawa,
Lying on top of the mountain."

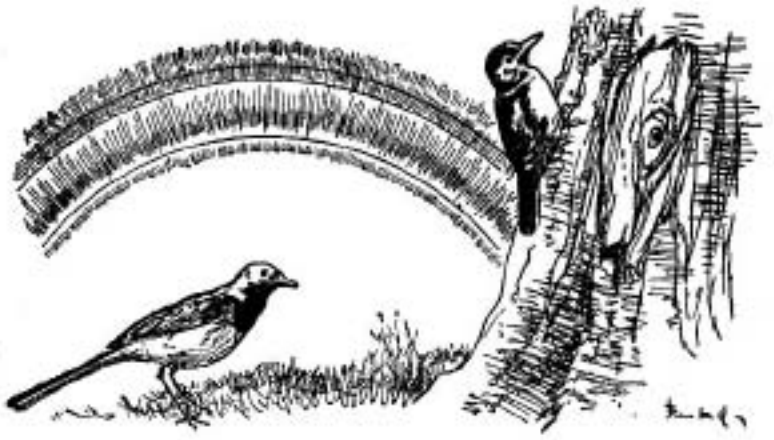
Te Kanawa wished more and more heartily that they would go away and leave him in peace. Suddenly he thought that they might be satisfied if they had his jewels. So he took off an ornament from his neck—a little figure carved most beautifully in green jasper, and an ear-ring of jasper, and another of the ivory of a shark's tooth. He held them up in the firelight so that the fairies might see them; then he thought it wiser not to tempt them to come too close to him, as their touch might set some dreadful enchantment on him. So he took a stick and stuck it upright in the ground, and hung his neck ornament and his ear-rings on it.

The fairies sang on for a little, then they stole up to where the jewels hung glittering in the firelight, and took their shadows and handed them about one to another. When the last fairy had examined and admired, the whole band disappeared, and no more was seen of them.

There was the carved jewel of jasper, there were the ear-rings. The fairies had carried away their shadows alone:

shadows were enough to please their fairy hearts. So Te Kanawa took back his ornaments and put them on, and as soon as it was daylight he roused his companions and got away from the mountains as fast as he could. When he went hunting for kiwis again, he was careful to return home before sunset.

AUSTRALIA



THE RAINBOW

DEEREEREE was a widow who lived in a lonely camp with her four little girls, and cared for them as well as she could, all by herself. She was always on the look-out for danger, and when Bibbee made his camp near hers she was afraid of him. She could hardly rest that night; she stayed awake and wailed, "Deereeree, wyah, wyah, Deereeree."

In the morning Bibbee went to see her, and asked why she had cried so dismally all through the dark hours.

"Oh, I thought I heard some one walking about, and I was frightened."

"You should not be frightened, when all your four children are with you."

After sunset the cry began again, and night after night it sounded from the widow's camp: "Deereeree, wyah, wyah, Deereeree."

Bibbee lay awake listening to it. Again he went to see his frightened neighbour.

"Marry me, and I will take care of you," he said.

But she didn't want to do that.

Then Bibbee set to work and built a beautiful arch of many colours. It spanned the sky; it was a roadway from the earth to the stars.

When the lonely widow saw this she was more scared than ever, not knowing what it might be. She cried "Wyah, wyah," for a long time, and looked out to see if she could see her neighbour, but he had gone into his camp, and there was no

sign of him. At last she could no longer endure the strange sight alone, and she took the four children over to his camp and asked what it might mean.

"I made it," said Bibbee. "I made it to show how strong I am, and how safe you will be if you marry me. And if you don't marry me, I will make something more wonderful, and it will be terrible, too; very likely it will destroy the whole earth."

Then the widow gave in, and she and Bibbee were married, and lived together very happily in his camp.

Years afterwards, when they died, they were changed into birds. Now Deereeree is the wagtail, and all through the summer night she cries, "Deereeree, wyah, wyah, Deereeree." Bibbee is the woodpecker, and he is always climbing trees, as if he wanted to plan out another rainbow bridge passing from earth to heaven.

THE SEVEN SISTERS

THERE were once seven sisters. They were beautiful and strange: their long hair hung to their waists, and their skin sparkled like white frost, and icicles clung to their bodies. They often went hunting, but always by themselves; they would never join other tribes or make friends with any one.

Seven boys, all brothers, wanted the girls for their wives, and followed them when they went on their hunting expeditions, and watched to find out where they made their camp. These boys were clever at finding wild honey. They would catch a bee, and gum a tuft of wild down to its back; then they would set it free and follow it to its nest. They collected the honey, and put it in bark baskets—*wirrees*—which they laid outside the girls' camp. The seven sisters ate the honey, but they would not go hunting with the brothers, or listen to their wooing.

At this time it happened that a hunter called Wurrunah quarrelled with his mother. He came home tired out and hungry, and found no meal ready for him. The old woman told him that there was no *durrie** left. "Well, I will make it myself," said he, and then found that there were no doonburr seeds in the wirree. He went to all his friends and tried to borrow some, but with no success. So angry and hurt was he that he went off to find a new people and a new country.

* Bread made of doonburr, or grass seed.

The first person he saw was an old man chopping bees' nests from the trees. This old man turned his face towards him and watched him coming, but when Wurrunah came close to him he saw that he had no eyes. He spoke to him and asked for food. The old man gave him a wirree of honey, and told him where his camp was, and asked him if he would like to rest there. His movements were not those of a blind man, and, when Wurrunah questioned him, he declared that he could see perfectly well. All his tribe were eyeless, said he, but they could see through their noses.

This scared Wurrunah, and he thought it better not to remain with this tribe. He went on alone and camped by a lagoon, where he drank clear water and felt much refreshed. He slept well, but when he wakened he was confused and troubled to find that the lagoon from which he had drunk had disappeared: he was on the edge of a great plain. As a storm was coming up, he did not look for the lagoon, but set to work to make a shelter. He fixed poles for its framework, and then began to gather bark for the roof. He saw a fine piece, but, as he lifted it, he was horrified to find beneath it a creature such as he had never seen before. "I am Bulgahnunnoo," it roared, and Wurrunah was so scared that he dropped the bark and fled.

He had not gone far before he saw a flock of emus coming to drink at a river, and decided to kill one for food. He climbed a tree and hurled his spear at one and pierced it. As he ran to pick it up he saw that the flock were not emus, as he had supposed, but men of an unknown tribe, and that he had slain one of them. He thought it better to escape as soon as he could, and crept away into the bush and came upon the camp of the seven sisters.

They told him that they wandered from place to place and made friends with no one, but they gave him food and shelter for that night. In the morning he pretended to go away, but he hid till they set out with their yam-sticks, and then he followed them. They stopped by a nest of flying ants and unearthed several eggs, and sat down to feast on them. Wurrunah crept up secretly and stole two yam-sticks. When the girls had finished eating they discovered that two sticks had gone, and, after a vain search, decided that their owners should stay behind to look for them. As they hunted among grass and bushes Wurrunah stole from his hiding-place and stuck the sticks firmly in the ground, and hid again. When the girls turned round they saw the sticks and joyfully ran to

pull them up. As they tugged to loosen them, Wurrunah sprang out and seized them and held them in a tight grip, and told them they must come away with him and be his two wives.

They were very unwilling to do this, but his strength was greater than theirs, and they were obliged to give in.

"Some day we shall be stolen from you," they said.

But Wurrunah did not think that was likely. He was pleased with his two beautiful wives, although they were cold and strange. He would try to melt the icicles from them by making them stand by his fire; but, though the cold drops extinguished its flames, the icicles still hung glittering about them. They grew happier with him after a little, but they often talked together of their five sisters, and wondered when they would return to them.

One day Wurrunah ordered his wives to cut pine bark to feed his fire.

"You will lose us if we cut pine bark," they said.

Still Wurrunah ordered them to do it, and spoke angrily to them, for his fire was burning very low. They took their stone tomahawks and drove them into the bark of two trees, and at once the trees began to grow. Higher and higher they grew, and higher and higher from the earth they lifted the two girls, clinging to the tomahawks stuck in the bark. At last they touched the sky, and there were the five sisters waiting joyfully for the lost ones, and stretching out their hands to take them in.

Wurrunah danced with rage and howled with despair when he saw his wives going from him. A kinsman of the seven sisters * stood in the sky looking on, and he laughed and laughed at Wurrunah's fury, and ever since he has been called the laughing star.

But the seven boys who had loved the sisters so dearly were inconsolable for the loss of them, and at last the good spirits took pity on their grief and gave them, too, a place in the sky. All day they hunt bees, and at night they dance while the seven girls sing for them. Cold and shining and beautiful are the seven sisters, but the lustre of two of them is a little dimmed—spoiled with the warmth of Wurrunah's fire.

* The seven sisters are the stars we call the Pleiades; the boys are the stars of Orion's sword and belt; and the laughing star is the planet Venus.

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